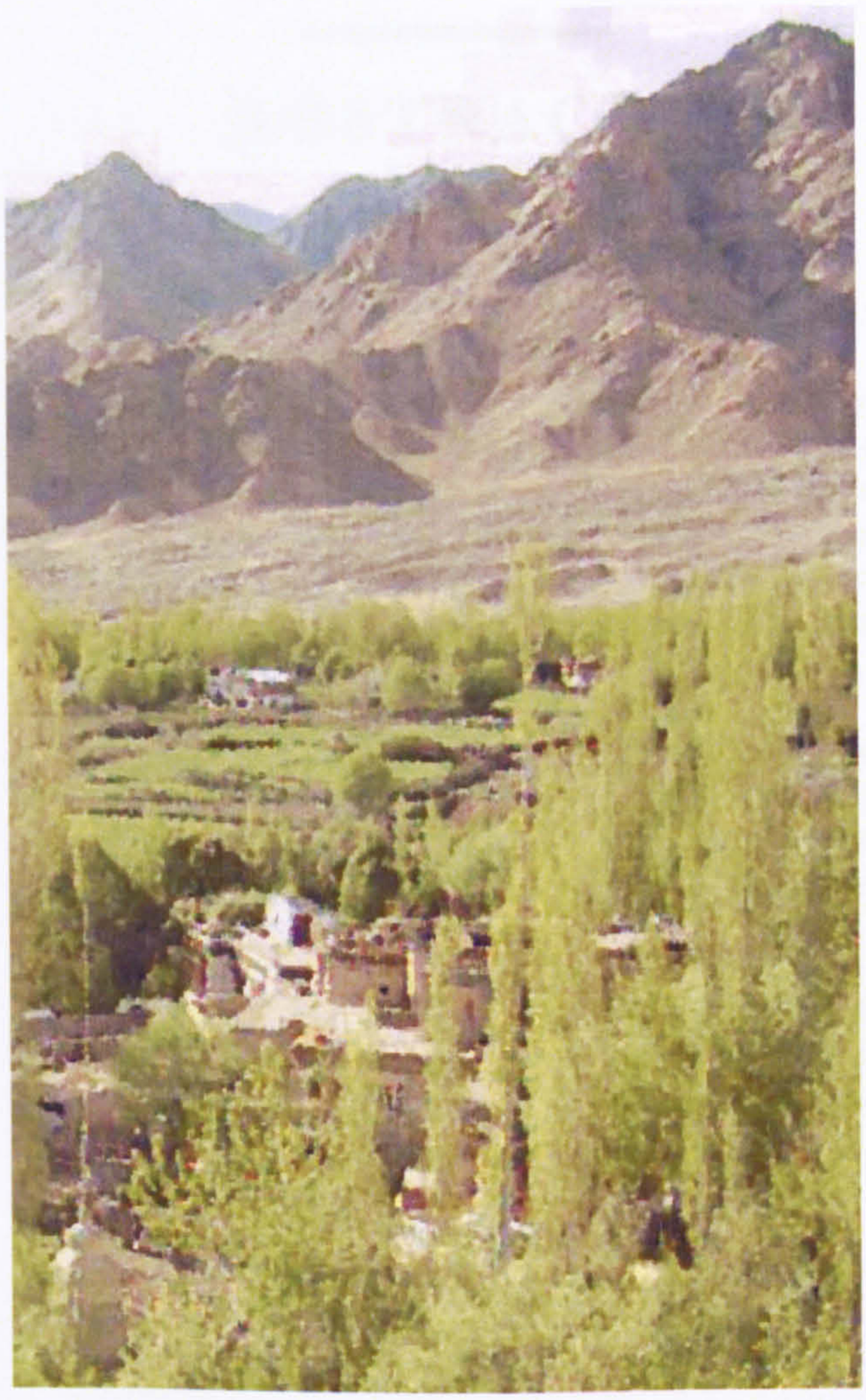


SUFFERING DEVELOPMENT

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND WESTERN EDUCATION IN LADAKH

David Bainton

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol
in accordance with the requirements of
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Social Science and Law

Graduate School of Education
March 2007

78, 431 words

DEDICATIONS

For Noémi
whose presence is felt upon every thought

and

for my parents, Norman and Cynthia
whose different ways of caring for the world inscribe these pages

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If this thesis has in any way found scenic routes through the landscape it is only because of the local knowledge of the many people along the way who have been generous of their ideas, their time and not least, of themselves.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Leon Tikly, who has been a critical friend throughout the journey - ever challenging, ever supportive, whose openness has made this research a pleasure. I would also like to thank Jane Speedy, whose warmth and eccentricities have opened up the cracks to let in rays of lightness.

Special place should be given to the many people who I met in Ladakh, and who made this research such a memorable and transformative time. Special thanks go to Nawang Tsering for his support throughout my time in Ladakh, for his unassuming expertise, his companionship and his humour, to Stanzin Thakspa, whose friendship and knowledge offered a way to see Ladakh that would otherwise not have been possible, and to Hugh Carroll for his very human undertanding of Buddhism that has infused its way into this thesis.

The stories of so many people gave ways to understand Ladakh, of which those written here are only a small part. Rigzin the sculptor, the wonderful students of Saboo Junior High school, and so many others whose tolerance and quietness have left a lasting impression. In the end these stories are written out of respect for them.

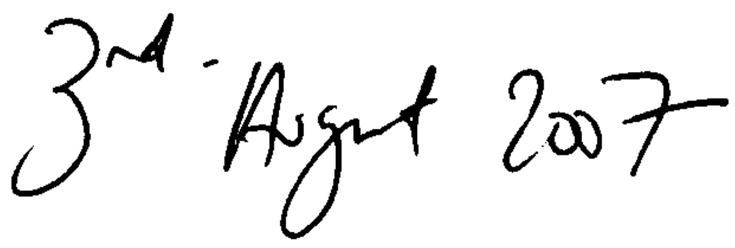
On a personal note, none of this would have been possible without Noémi, whose love has woven the place of warmth that has been a gift to spend time within. Much of the writing of this thesis was done in Hungary, and would not have been possible without the support of Noemi's Family. Thanks to Katalin for her thouhtfulness, Sanyi for his excellent cooking and Kati for her cheerfulness.

Finally, I would like to thank the ESRC, for making this all possible.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other academic award. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

Signed



Date

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

TRANSFORMATIVE PATHS

WANDERINGS IN HIMALAYAN WORLDS

This introductory chapter offers a series of possible paths into reading the thesis, and represents the ways that I have come to understand the process of researching indigenous knowledge in Ladakh.

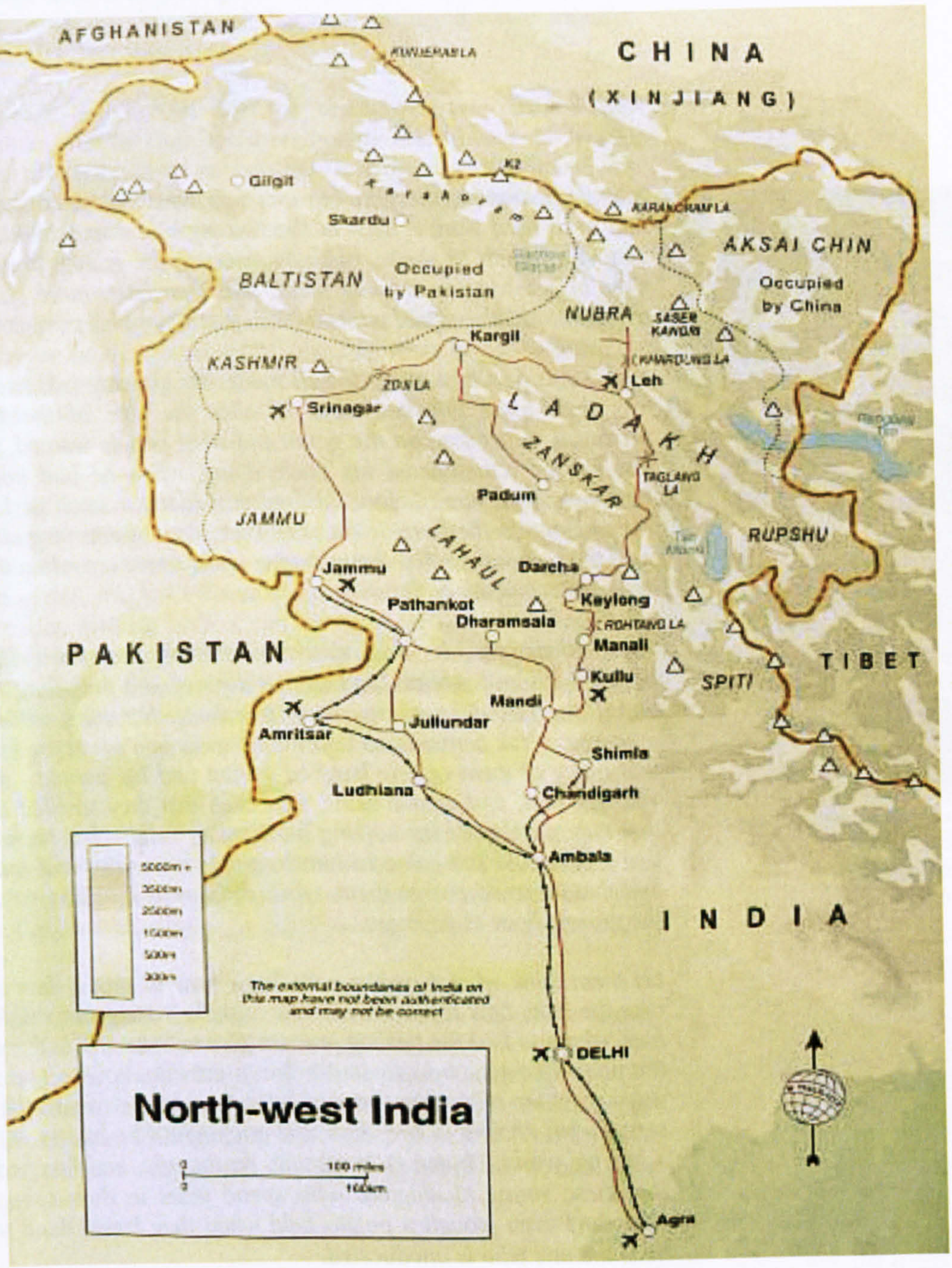
These paths offer an initial orientation within the mountainous landscape of research epistemology, and set out a form of research aesthetic that the thesis tries to live by – seeing ethnographic research as holding the possibility for compassionate transformative encounters; seeing research not as answering questions as much as circling around possible truths; seeing research as a process of knowledge production.

These paths can therefore also be understood as starting points for different Deleuzian 'lines of flight' that offer different trajectories through the research.

Chapter outline

Transformative Paths
Circular trajectories
Compassionate encounters
Weavings


TAJIKISTAN
DESERT
Kabul
IANISTAN
Karakoram Mtns
MOUNTAINS
Indian claim
Zanskar Mtns
Islāmābād
Quetta
Garhwal
Lahore
HIMALAYAS
Mt. Everest
Kangchenjunga
PAKISTAN
New Delhi
Lhasa
NEPAL
Darjeeling
BHUTAN
Lucknow
Kānpur
Kāthmāndu
Thimphu
Ahmadābād
INDIA
BANGLADESH
Dhaka
Surat
Kolkata
(Calcutta)
Mandala
Nāgpur
Chittagong
Mumbai
(Bombay)
Pune
DECCAN
BURM
Hyderābād
WESTERN GHATS
EASTERN GHATS
Rangoon
Bangalore
Chennai
(Madras)
Bay of
Bengal
ANDAMAN
ISLANDS
(INDIA)
Andaman
Sea
Jaffna
SRI LANKA


AFGHANISTAN
CHINA
(XINJIANG)
K2
Gilgit
Skardu
KARAKORAM LA
AKSAI CHIN
Occupied by China
BALTISTAN
Occupied by Pakistan
NUBRA
SASER KANGRI
Kargil
KASHMIR
KHARDUNG LA
Leh
ZOJI LA
Srinagar
LADAKH
ZANSKAR
TAGLANG LA
Padum
JAMMU
LAHAUL
RUPSHU
Jammu
Darcha
Pathankot
Keylong
Dharamsala
ROHTANG LA
Manali
PAKISTAN
Kullu
SPITI
TIBET
Mandi
Amritsar
Jullundar
Shimla
Ludhiana
Chandigarh
Ambala
INDIA
DELHI
Agra
The external boundaries of India on this map have not been authenticated and may not be correct
North-west India
100 miles
100km

Two Brokpa women

Khalingpas are people from the Village of Khaling

In Bhutan the length of the male dress, the 'gho' is indicative of social status – wearing it short, being associated with a physical working life, and so lower status

After four months, the grinding mill was now almost finished. It had been hard work – each of the two gigantic stones had taken almost a month to shape, carefully selecting the granite from the river before roughly shaping them, and then later, more slowly, carefully, until they fitted perfectly with that slight necessary curve.

Norbu was proud of what he had made. His grinding mill had no less than three different ways to alter the size of the flour produced, depending on the grain, and what people wanted, and, just like he remembered his uncle doing, when he had helped him make one years before, he had embedded a small perfectly round stone in the base of the shaft that joined the turning wheel with the paddles, so that the millstone could turn even when there wasn't much water in the river.

These Khalingpas, he said almost disdainfully, even with their potato fields and schools, and animal doctors with their long Gho and white cuffs, did not know how to make such a thing, while he a Brokpa, a Yak herder from beyond the mountain could. He knew that many of them quietly laughed at him and his people - their Yak hair hats, and animal skins, said even that they smelled bad, that they were good for nothing but herding Yaks - but he knew that they would still come to him to grind they maize and millet, and that he could charge them, what, perhaps as much as 10% of the ground flour as payment.

Let them think what they like – he knew how to skin a deer and cure the hide, how to fell a tree, how to make waterproof Yak hair hats, where to find the healing grass to give to Yaks that had eaten the poison flowers, how to start a fire in the rain, how to find his way across the mountains, how to listen for rain. He could walk to Merak from Khaling in two days and one night if he had to. What a strange world, Bhutan is becoming, he thought, and laughed – that these young Khalingpas, who spend years in their schools, who can't even plough a potato field when they leave, think that he is the one who is uneducated.

Transformative paths

A moment in time, a memory from Bhutan that has been revisited so many times that perhaps all I can be certain of now is the wonder – at the thought of this man sitting, for two months, carving his millstones.

The years and the number of retellings have enabled this encounter to cross over into a mythology able to bear the weight of reinscription, able to become somehow symbolic of my concern with the impact of western education on indigenous knowledge that this thesis explores.

Stories must be started somewhere – but their birth is a violent one, begun as it is in an act of silencing what has gone before - what will not be told. What can be included within this circle of possible tales?

I do not say that it was this moment, when, in a previous incarnation as a science teacher in the village of Khaling, Eastern Bhutan, I was taken by some of my year seven students to see this grinding mill, that my interest in indigenous knowledge began, but rather that, looking back, I can see how my understandings and thoughts that are present in this thesis are rooted not simply in the 'data' collected during my PhD fieldwork in Ladakh, Northern India, but rather that these fieldwork experiences were themselves rooted in myriad previous experiences such as this.

This story is therefore placed here to represent (make present) the ways that living and working in Bhutan between 1996-9 cannot be separated from this research into the impact of western schooling on indigenous knowledge in neighbouring Ladakh between 2003-2006.

The village of Khaling, Bhutan, where I worked as a science teacher in a Government High school (1996-1999)

Bhutan is present in terms of the trajectory of my research interests, in the choice of Ladakh as a site for the research (as a culturally and geographically similar location on the margins of India), but perhaps more critically in my ability to make sense of my experiences in Ladakh at all. Bhutan therefore is an intrinsic part of this research story, though I collected no formal data there.

Experience is a structuring concept here. I choose to understand experience as an embodied form of coming-to-know. And so, I bring Bhutan into the circle of the research story to 'trouble' what might count as data for this thesis, to transgress the imaginary line that polices the boundaries of academia, allowing some forms of experience to count as data, others not.

An ethnography that seeks to dissolve the boundaries between life that we necessarily experience – bodily, humanly, intellectually, emotionally - and research, the name that we choose to give to some of these experiences that we privilege.

> *no matter what significance we attach to discourse or culture the phenomenal world of human consciousness and activity is never reducible to that which allegedly determines the condition of its possibility. (the subject is) the very site where life is lived meanings are made, will is exercised, reflection takes place, consciousness finds expression, determinations take effect, and has itself formed or broken.*
>
> *(Jackson, 1996: 22)*

Its seems ironic to me that while people are actually very good at understanding each other - we read emotion in others and ourselves, we empathise, we intuit, we feel. These very human achievements that we have found to understand each other are largely absented from many forms of research knowing.

As the boundaries of social science research expand with postmodern vigour, and the line becomes faint, there is a double border crossing (Giroux, 1992) perhaps that are as much ethical and political as epistemological - first a movement of visibility where the previous experiences that inevitably inform our understanding can be seen – and second, a movement of liberation where other human experiences are no longer silenced in our research knowing.

Taking meaning making as an intersubjective process, the idea of double movements recurs throughout this thesis — inward thoughts/outward experiences; knowledge of others/knowledge of the west; past/future – borrowing from Buddhist philosophy, these are paradoxes to overcome, not in a western sense of finding new ways of seeing able to overcome the tensions between them, but, perhaps to enter a space where Buddhist and postmodern thought share common ground, where the illusory nature of these categories dissolve into a deeper understanding.

The initial story is also placed here to prefigure the narrative dimension of the thesis – both in terms of a narrative understanding of human identity, but also as a form of research praxis and representation.

The different articulations of this will unfold as the thesis develops, but perhaps the most important is this - if experiences are to count as data, then those phenomenal moments of suffering, of joy, of hope that remain inevitably irreducible to our theoretical understandings of them, are best understood and expressed through narrative.

> *Before the unsayable we are alone. And this, I believe, is why stories are told. All stories are roads which end at a cliff face. Sometimes the cliff towers above us, sometimes it falls away, sheer at our feet. But when a story leads you to the unsayable, you're in company. That and that alone is the comfort.*
>
> *(Berger, 1997: iv)*

I realise, as I write that I have used that expression twice now,

'the ways that we have found to',

It is a call not only to a shared humanity, but to appreciate, respect, work with, utilise that which humanity has achieved – be it indigenous knowledge, narrative knowing, empathy, spirituality. It is a call, to draw upon Santos (2004), not to 'silence' or to 'waste the social experience' of so many lives in favour of modern alternatives. An attempt to construct a research that does not add another silencing in its own praxis.

And this too, has some roots in Bhutan – for three years is long enough for awe at the exotic to become appreciation of the everyday, for experiences to be bonded within friendships, for moments of wonder to become accreted with layers of familiarity. This appreciation of the everyday, with all its ways of knowing, is perhaps one of the ways in which a colonial 'Othering' can be overcome.

While I also taught Science in a school in Zimbabwe, I have only marginally drawn upon these experiences, in this work.

Many years ago a Sri Lankan friend gave me a book ***'Serendip to Sri Lanka'***. I have loved the word, and idea, ever since – loved it for the way that it smiles at life - not so much because it implies that wonderful things will come your way at unexpected times, but because it let's you in on the secret that they already are, if you can just find ways to see them.

Looking back now, at the end of this research journey, it is all too easy to forget that the path that I inscribed from there to here was not in fact there all along, but that has been walked from one serendipitous encounter to another – from the water mill, to the dusty copy of Clifford Geertz' (1983) book 'Local knowledge' picked up in a Bhutanese Bookshop, still next to me on the shelf, to the endless number of chance encounters wherein the world unfolds.

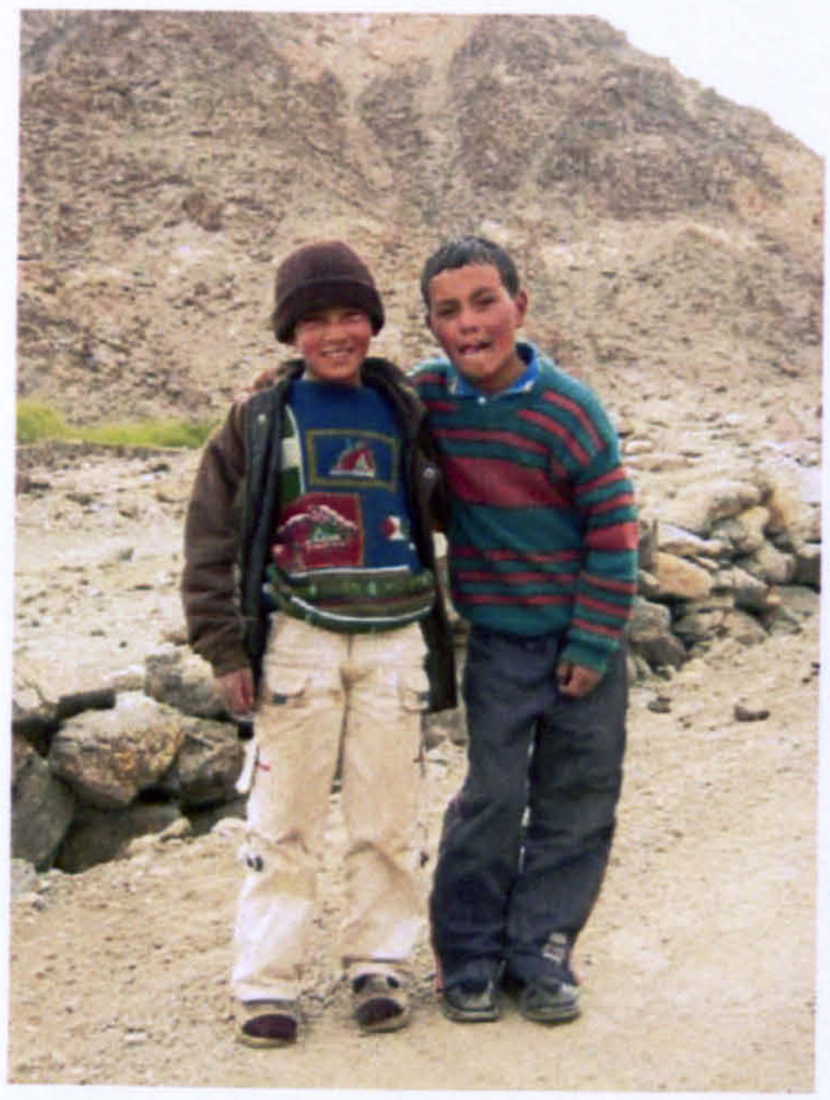
Such stories remind us of the serendipitous nature of our being in the world, reminds me not to colonise this research journey as 'mine' at the expense of the all of those people and contingencies that opened up new paths along the way.

Circular trajectories

> ***For the heart of the matter is always somewhere else than where it is supposed to be. (...) There is no pushing, no directing, no breaking through, no need for a linear progression which gives the comforting illusion that one knows where one goes.***
>
> ***(Trinh T. Minh ha, 1989:1)***

I love the writing of Trinh T. Minh-ha. This is not so much, adopting Barthes' (1990) distinction between readerly and writerly texts, the 'readerly' complex postcolonial theorised writing of Spivak or Bhabha, but a more open, 'writerly' subtler, deeper form of expression that engages the heart, and the unconscious – you feel drawn in and carried by the language into new ways of thinking.

For Barthes, this distinction allowed a way to understand how the text positioned the reader and the possible meanings that could be taken. A readerly text, being one that was closed, only allowing for a passive 'reading', where the text could be either accepted or rejected. A writerly one, on the other hand, allowed the reader to respond, to engage with the text as a creative act akin to the writing process of the author.



This quote resonates for me – in the recognition of the subtleties of communication that were present in Bhutan and Ladakh, with its implication for interpreting data in Ladakh - the indirectness – there is no breaking through – you never reach to the heart, it is always elsewhere. Metaphors of hidden meanings; truth is replaced with an acceptance of the serendipity of what is found. Or as Geertz, in a more colourful way puts it,

> ***You don't exactly penetrate another culture, as the masculinist image would have it. You put yourself in its way and it bodies forth and enmeshes you.***
>
> ***(Geertz, 1995, quoted in Behar, 1996: 5)***

As I thought about the ways that I might develop my initial research problem - the impact of western education on indigenous knowledge – the quote from Trinh T. Minh-ha came back to me, rescued me, held as I was for a while in the expectation that educational researchers research schools, don't they?

The voices spoke in the research methods courses –

> ***What form of classroom analysis will you use?***
> ***What learning theory are you adopting?***
> ***How important do you consider student/teacher interactions?***

But
/throw a rock in the water and the ripples carry its impact across the lake/see how the ripples disturb the soil at the bank/look at the birds fly off from the trees/see the fish dive into the depths/

And so I chose to circle around schooling, circle around this research problem - for the first few weeks of my fieldwork in one village, quite literally – deliberately walking past the village schools, seeing students across the wall, as I talked with farmers, blacksmiths, traditional healers, weavers and others about how they saw their changing world and the effect of schooling on it.

Of course, such an approach tied in with other more political ambitions - to give centre stage to the indigenous knowledge practitioners, to give an indigenous knowledge perspective, standpoint even, on the research. In the end, of course, I visited the schools too, saw their complexities, engaged with the ways that they too are trapped in their own logic, but in many ways the schools themselves have consciously remained the negative space of the thesis, something that, in looking for its effects, rather than it, the unseen spaces around them are made visible.

9

What I could do.
I could mend nets. Thatch a roof. Build stairs. Make a basket from reeds. Splint the leg of a cow. Cut turf. Build a wall. Go three rounds with Joe in the ring Da put up in the barn. I could dance sets. Read the sky. Make a barrel for mackerel. Mend roads. Make a boat. Stuff a saddle. Put a wheel on a cart. Strike a deal. Make a field. Work the swarth turner, the float and the thresher. I could read the sea. Shoot straight. Make a shoe. Shear sheep. Remember poems. Set potatoes. Plough and harrow. Read the wind. Tend bees. Bind wyndes. Make a coffin. Take a drink. I could frighten you with stories. I knew the song to sing to a cow when milking. I could play twenty-seven tunes on my accordion.

'I could read the sky', from which this is a page, is a wonderful collaborative book of poetic prose and photographs by Timothy O'Grady and Steve Pyke (1999). Like many others whose works inform mine, and which will reappear throughout this text – Trinh T. Minh-ha, Michael Jackson, Milan Kundera, this book has remained in my heart, in the heart of the thesis, whilst others have come and gone, leaving only faint traces.

What I could do

Its effects can be seen – not only in a 'romancing' of 'knowledge-as-praxis' – a call to make present the ways that these everyday practices are also knowledge, but also its knowing, its epistemology, the mixture of poetry and prose, where, in the juxtaposition of different forms of knowing, the limitations of each are made visible, where,

I take the term romancing from Mishler (1999) who uses it to describe his openly positive relationship to the work of the craftartisists he studied as a potential form of 'nonalienated labour'.

> ***'The photos are a reminder of everything which is beyond the power or words.... And the words recall what can never be made visible in any photograph.'***
>
> ***(Berger, 1999: iv)***

In the same way, the photos and text in this thesis run alongside each other, offering parallel engagements. Occasionally they have a shared point of reference, but mostly the photos have been placed as an alternative narrative that brings different ways for the thesis to be read and engaged with.

This layered text that juxtaposes theory, data, autobiography, photography and reflection seeks to be a representational 'circling around' that attempts to create spaces for the reader – spaces for reflection and resonance.

If the 'coming-to-know' of this thesis has been so far framed by postmodern concerns with standpoint, uncertainty, partiality, so too is it by critical social science, understanding research as a form of praxis, that acknowledges

> *the dialectic interplay between our dual positions as subjects, first as active agents making and transforming the world, which then becomes the "objective" conditions to which we must then respond, as we adapt, make and transform both ourselves and these conditions*
>
> *(Mishler, 1999: 18)*

Mishler reminds us not only of the need for epistemological sensitivity to how we produce our research knowledge, but also towards the more political dimensions of the agency of our work.

Once freed from adopting a correspondence theory of truth, freed to understand theories as part of a process of knowledge production, we are left, rather than chasing better explanations of the world, to be reflexive of the ways that our ideas participate, very directly in the process of world making. This is not an esoteric point of theory – the billions of dollars of aid money that flow around the world into educational initiatives are materialisations, manifestations of particular educational and developmental discourses – every time a school is built or a teacher trained, ideas are being recruited, made part of praxis.

An understanding of our implication, as knowledge producers, in the process of world making therefore leads to a concern, for critical social scientists, with ways to develop emancipatory knowledge. The question of how, in response to challenges from postmodernism, this might be achieved has been, of course, the holy grail of 'the left' for many years now.

This work is situated here, and the theoretical positioning that I adopt – one concerned with both postmodern sensitivities and a critical agenda, seeks to offer new ways to understand the relationship between schooling, indigenous knowledge and livelihood.

And so, while the dominant discourse within educational research on the relationship between western and non western knowledge is one of rapprochement, where

> *the assumption is that while the different paradigms cannot be reconciled, nonetheless it should be possible to devise a methodology for the exchange of knowledge across the gap*
>
> *(Pottier, 2000: 4-5)*

of hope that indigenous knowledge might,

> *better serve the needs of all students, both mainstream and multicultural students, who must solve problems during times of environmental crisis*
>
> *(Corsiglia and Snively, 2001: 85)*

and of the possibility that

> *[...] students of science are in fact able to retain much of their traditional world view, while still appreciating the new view that science offers. They see science as opening up new horizons without losing sight of the old ones, and develop strategies to deal with apparently incompatible visions.*
>
> *(Lowe, 1995: 665)*

Outside, in the knowledge deserts that supposedly surrounds schools, all is (seemingly) quiet - the very real and detrimental affects that schooling is having on indigenous knowledge is not witnessed.

There is conflation here too, amidst the silencing.

Norbu, the Brokpa man we met at the start knows it. He knows that the silencing of his knowledge is made possible by the conflation of 'education' with 'schooling' – by a discourse that suggests that, somehow where there are no schools, there is no knowledge.

Perhaps it is the nature of educationalists to always find rays of sunshine peeping through the clouds. Certainly, my research would attest to the ways that the hegemony of schooling is maintained through a discourse of possibility, of hope – to the selling of modernist dreams.

This thesis attempts to offer a different reading of the effects of schooling on indigenous knowledge. It seeks to look in the places that Educationalists, precisely because they look at what goes on in schools, tend not to go, and to untangle educational and development discourses to show how they articulate, in Stuart Hall's sense, to marginalise indigenous knowledge. It seeks to understand what forms of research knowledge might hold the possibility for counter hegemonic understandings.

The answer to this must inevitably be both contextually situated and temporally located. Adopting a poststructuralist view, I argue that the question of which forms of (research) knowledge are emancipatory is something only possible to understand in the unfolding present of a specific context, where power relations are reinscribed and the possibility for counter hegemony found.

In this spirit, rather than adopting a fixed theoretical framework, in chapter II I use a Deleuzian approach to draw together the work of Santos, Gramsci and Foucault with Buddhist philosophy and narrative theory into a theoretical constellation. The research that this is part of can be best thought of as a reflexive process of trying to understand, through their utilisation what theoretical ideas might best support the production of counter hegemonic knowledge of the impact of education on indigenous knowledge in the specific context of Ladakh.

Compassionate encounters

It is ironic that I became a teacher. My first days in primary school were filled with terror. Later as a teacher, I would struggle to bring as much humanity into my teaching as I could.

It is ironic too that I became a science teacher – I so enjoyed art, but then, aged fourteen, the school did not allow me to do both art and science, and a future was set. Aged 18, chemistry was a sensible degree. Aged 21, I could get a job as a science teacher. Aged 25, I could go to Bhutan, if only I was prepared to teach science.

There is a story of a Western architect who had come to Bhutan to help repair the walls of a Dzong – one of the old castle-like buildings that act as the administrative centres for regions. When the building work that the Western architect started collapsing, they called in a traditional 'Master Builder', to sort it out – replacing the large stones that the westerner had used as foundations, with small ones – small ones being, en masse, more dense than the large ones, as they have less air gaps between.

What I saw people able to do

Crack a stone with fire
Weave bamboo into a thread
Turn bark into paper
Sheer sheep with a knife
Find their way across a mountain
Build a home on a cliff face

We are all caught in the privileging of certain forms of knowing. I look back, and see the scars. Maybe this is too strong. Certainly, looking back, I can see the ways that I have been inscribed by the hegemony of certain ways of knowing the world.

There is a particular quality to the concept of teacher – the embodiment of (a) certain knowledge. Perhaps it is the unashamed directionality of its pretence – an encounter pre-framed, colonially constructed, developmentally maintained, institutionally enabled to privilege forms of western knowing.

Masemann used the title 'ways of knowing' for the 1990 presidential address of the American Comparative and International Education Society, later published in Comparative Education Review (1990). Such issues have been of abiding interest to this field in subsequent years.

There is a particular quality too, to the concept of researcher – of someone privileged to speak, to find out, to look again. Any research journey should be taken cautiously, particularly by a white European man researching indigenous knowledge, for as Smith (1999) has pointed out, research on indigenous lands is inextricably linked to colonialism.

And yet, amidst the caution lies possibility. As Bhabha (1994) reminds us - a colonial encounter is always one where hybridity lurks, one that Taussig (1993) reminds us is filled with mimesis as well as alterity, one that in the need to continually reinscribe the lines of authority and power, becomes vulnerable, possible to resist.

And, if this is possible, then ethnography, both in its political and epistemological sensitivity, and perhaps most critically in its focus upon the embodied intersubjective encounter, has the potential to make the world anew by its praxis.

It is here perhaps where that which Santos might call 'taking sides' with the south, where that which Levinas might call a 'being for the other', where that which Buddhism might refer to as 'compassion', has the possibility of being manifested.

It is here, as each generation must respond to its own configuration of colonialism, that the fragile possibility of research making the world less colonial, rather than more, lies.

Weavings

I wish to produce truthful narratives. In the authoritative fiction of the linear text where research proceeds smoothly, from research question through theory, data, analysis to presentation, are processes of silencing – a silencing of the embodied, the contingent, the tacit, the located – the very aspects of knowing that might offer the possibility of being sensitive to indigenous knowledge.

And so, in seeking to find ways of writing where what is valuable about such alternative ways of knowing is not simply lost in translation to western forms of representation, I have turned to narrative.

The narratives that this thesis contains are different aspects of a coming-to-know that I have characterised as a dialectic between theory and experience. As such, I understand theory and methodology not as something that is developed apriori to data collection and analysis, but developed in relation to the experiential aspects of the research, thereby reconfiguring these aspects as being as much outcomes of the research as analytic or substantive aspects.

Four Chapters

The first three chapters speak principally to the research process itself, broadly relating to issues of theory, methodology and analysis respectively. The fourth, the final chapter of the thesis, is a reflexive talking back to the research questions.

Seven poieses

These seven poieses overlap, each offering a different path through the landscape, each offers a different partial reading, a different response to the research questions - one a response to a day herding 'dzo' in the mountains; one a response to week teaching maths in a school; one a response to a month interviewing indigenous knowledge practitioners; one a response to a week as an apprentice to a traditional sculptor; one an analysis of local attempts to 'resist' western schooling; two offer readings of the historical and geopolitical context.

Four tales of Drukpa Kunley

These four tales act as partner pieces for the chapters/poieses that they precede – and act as a critique of development, schooling, resistance, and this thesis respectively.

In an attempt to keep alive within the writing the sense of this relationality, the sense of the nonlinearity, the process of crafting, the narratives adopt a form of montage that interweaves the theoretical, the experiential, the analytic to offer my own form of writerly text that seeks to juxtapose, to open spaces for contradiction, association, to highlight limitation, partiality.

Inevitably, while I see all the sections of this thesis as playing a part in answering the research questions, the different narratives speak to different places, some more to the research process itself, some more toward the context of indigenous knowledge and schooling in Ladakh. The former I have called chapters, of which there are four; the latter I have called poieses, of which there are seven.

To represent at a macro level, what each poiesis attempts at a micro level, I have therefore also interwoven the chapters and poieses so that theoretical debates can be located for the reader, as it was for me, within an already existing experiential space. In doing so, the hope is that this increases the profusion of possible readings, resonances and meanings that can be taken.

Finally, the text also includes four short 'tales' written in the style of the account of the life of Drukpa Kunley, a 16th Century Tibetan 'divine madman', who wandered the villages of Tibet and Bhutan, 'deconstructing' the taken for granted notions of people (Dowman, 2000). For its resonance with 'counter narrative' and for its possibility as a locally meaningful form of research representation, I have written these four pieces in the style of this fascinating book.

So, let us first turn to the first poiesis, to a day in June 2005 spent herding 'dzo' up the mountain above the village of Saboo, Ladakh.

FIRST POIESIS

DZO DANCING

Poiesis Outline

Prologue
Dzo Dancing
Postscript

Dzo Dancing

PROLOGUE

This poiesis is a response to a day spent walking above Saboo village taking some 'dzo' up into the mountains for their summer pasture where they can graze freely, and not disturb the fields of summer harvest down below in the village.

As we walked up through the mountains on a route that would eventually lead to the pass, the path became a narrative landscape for stories to emerge - stories of place, of past, but also stories of the dzo and knowledge of them – knowledge that I am characterising as indigenous knowledge. The poiesis seeks to find meaning in this experience for the possibility of how indigenous knowledge might be conceptualised.

Methodologically, the productive role of the act of walking in enacting stories of indigenous knowledge highlights the importance of methods of data collection that are sensitive to understanding forms of knowledge that are located in landscape. Epistemologically, understanding the narratives as enactments of indigenous knowledge draws attention to the pedagogic importance of such spaces and practices for the transmission of such knowledge.

The title comes from the dynamic between dzo and person that takes place during herding, and which I have characterised as a form of dance. The poiesis reflects on this to point towards an embodied understanding of indigenous knowledge.

DZO DANCING

The path strikes its way up the valley through and then above Saboo village. A path that has been drawn by generations, connecting the village to the 'beyond' spaces above the 'phu', that is the place/name given, in every village I go to, to that which is the end of the village, the 'just' before the beyond.

This path constitutes my experience that day. Up there, beyond the bridge, the path is still inscribed into the stone and sand and grass, a faint line in the brown landscape, while below, it has long been painted over in the more modern palette of tarmac grey.

There is a comfort to be found, up here, in this path, where giving and receiving are the same action, where, in tracing the lines that others have walked safely, I cannot but inscribe it further for others to follow, if they choose. This is no simple poetic phrasing - who, if lost on a mountain would not feel the warmth of that path as a gift – the way down, the presence of others, what other way of understanding would be better suited?

Maybe therefore, it should be no surprise that I have heard so many stories placed on this path in the mountains, in my conversations with people in the village. Stories of wealth, of desolation, of the everyday. These stories will be told, later, but that particular day the path was all about the Dzo.

Dzo.
A cross between a male Yak and a female cow.
A large working animal used for ploughing fields. Hardy enough for the mountains.

It might be interesting for you.' Nawang says, tomorrow, my wife and some people are taking their Dzo up the mountain. There is no grass for them here, and if they get in other people's fields they cause trouble, so we send them up for the summer.
Do you have to go and fetch them again at the end of the summer? I ask
They know when to come. My Dzo is an old fellow, he knows. He just comes when it is time. Now he goes and enjoys in the mountains.
There is pride – the Old Dzo knows!
But there is no grass in the mountain, it is all bare, I say, exposing my ignorance yet again.

Days later. I am talking with the man who speaks with pride about his water powered grinding mill. We have our milky teas sitting inside the stone dome, covering ourselves in last years white flour, after he has shown me around, lifted up the massive wheel to reveal the working underneath. But, like all people, there are many themes interleaving his narrative, not least of these, Yaks, the path up the mountains, the (old) old (colonial) times, mostly filled with stories of oppression, forced trips across the mountains in winter. It is perhaps unsurprising that this path and these mountains are often mentioned. Gyatso translates

Oh you beautiful beast, you strong beast!
Your tail is long, and your horns reach to the sky!
Please plough our fields.
Please work hard for us now.
And we will take you to the pastures
Where you can eat long grass and flowers
And do nothing all day!
Oh, you beautiful beast!
(Ladakhi song of dzo, quoted in Norberg - Hodge, 2000: 26)

He says the path goes up past Digar, after that he does not know it, but he knows it reaches up to Digar la, and then to the Nubra valley. In the winter, if people wanted to go to over Digar la, they would take their yak going in front to drive back the snow to allow people to follow.

I want to write about Yaks.
Hairy black Yaks, their long tails. Massive beasts. Their world is that of the Beyond. Cannot survive in the valleys down below, must spend their lives roaming the cooler mountain passes. They, like the path translate between the world and what is 'beyond'.

The Yak herding Brokpa of Eastern Bhutan. If you ventured past the enchanted 'dung ling tso' lake, and over the mountain top from which you can see both the mountains of Tibet, and the plains of India, there are herds of at times more than a hundred Yaks. The Brokpa - living with yaks. Yak hair hats, Yak hair jackets, Yak skin trousers.

Wealth/poverty?

No schooling, no roads, no cars, no no no no. No access to clean water (does fresh mountain spring water not count as clean because it is not out of a tap?). There is always an inescapable definitional negativity about the concept of poverty. The inevitable focus upon what people do not have not what they do. Let's be positive.
Yaks.
Great brutes of embodied resistance.

Fieldnote:
"Good with Dzo". Embodied knowledge, I often hear this expression, "good with"... Yangchang's dad is 'Good at farming'... good at. Which of the younger generation of Saboo is going to be 'good with Dzo?"

So, I am ready to sense sadness, as I hear his words - cannot rule out the possibility that the sadness is simply my own, as his words conjure up for me the beauty of yaks. 'Before, every household would have a Yak, now there are only two Yaks for the village. They live up in the mountains all year. We only keep them in case the village needs more Dzo.'

We chat as we walk, Nawang, Gyatso, I, and another guy that is coming with us. There are three Dzo altogether. Nawang's is the oldest, carries himself like the leader at the front. His left horn is broken, his right marks his age. The other two curry behind, like teenagers, squabbling for position.

Stories emerge.

Dorji, His Dad is good with Dzo. My Dzo, he broke his leg a few years ago, and Dorji's dad he set it. The doctors, they just put plaster on it, but that is not good for them

And

if they eat poison grass, then we bleed the nose and they get OK, that's different from what a vet does. Vet's they put a hole through to let the air out, we just bleed the nose

---

Years previously, I had learnt what western veterinary medicine does about poison grass, in Khaling, Bhutan, The other English person in the village, a vet, had talked about how, that day, she had had to take out her Swiss army knife in a field, and find that particular spot somewhere under the ribs, and push, hard, as hard as she could to make a hole through to the swelling stomach that would kill the cow, if she did not do so. Her first time, she had said The cow had lived.

———

There is knowledge here, indigenous knowledge. It is an easy label here – the knowledge brought up as contradictory, in opposition to that of the knowledge of the Vet. What is the nature of this knowledge – embodied? enacted?

———

I would not say that my own knowledge of this was only possible through participating in walking the Dzo up the mountain. Perhaps this knowledge would have emerged in interview, perhaps not. I only say that it was the walk, the context, that encouraged such things to be shared.

———

This is important. There is a fragility to this knowledge. Fragile flowers in this desert landscape. For me this is research knowledge, for Gyatso and Nawang community knowledge, indigenous knowledge. Fragile knowledge that perhaps only emerges, is possible to be revealed, shared, passed on in these moments.

———

There is a connection here with Foucault – on the understanding of power as the productive force that allows, encourages, empowers some moments to be, while others are passed silently by – some knowledge to be expressed, transmitted, while others lie dormant, silent. The merest shifting on the path takes us elsewhere, takes us away from these fragile places.

———

Indigenous knowledge should not be thought of as sitting is a repository of old peoples heads or bodies, like a library, an archive. There are only moments of experience where knowledge is enacted or it is not. Let us be clear – it is only the enactment of this knowledge that allows me to write about it here.

———

In the silence is ignorance
Ignor / Ignorance.
It is a naming. Ignorance - that which we choose to ignore.

———

It is easy to talk hypothetically about indigenous knowledge being preserved – easy to see that there are still people who have this knowledge – easy to say that there is no reason why young people are not able to listen, can't take up the practices - but the life dries out from them as the stories are untold. And this is no open battle, it is a war of attrition as some knowledge simply gets left behind forgotten about, passed over, unrecognised, unspoken.

———

Crapanzano writes in a similar way of the stories he heard that would emerge while travelling with Navajo Indians,

'It was as though the narrator's physical movement 'activated' the narrative performance that in turn "activated' the narrated story. (…) We take context-landscape – as containment and lose sense of its dynamic and reciprocal engagement with what we do and say.
(Crapanzano, 2004:45)

Ama Danmo / Mother Ibex

O mother ibex thou lookst sad,
O golden ibex thou looks faded,
No not so, by thee O child,
A little Makhoting juice did I drink
Which made me lazy

O Mother ibex,
atop the hill I see men!
No, not so, by thee O child,
A shepherd from Ling that is

O mother ibex I see,
gun on his shoulder
No, not so, by thee O golden Kiddie!
A shepherd's stick that is

O mother ibex I see,
Hunter's bag around his shoulder!
No, not so, by thee O child,
A shepherd's lunch that is

O mother ibex! I see thy waist red!
No, not so by thee child, I just rolled on a
Red soil!

The place where to eat is the hidden meadow,
The place where to hide is the high cliff child.
(with these words the mother ibex dies)

(in Sikander, 1997: 208-209)

The Dzo are more relaxed now, in the open ground. There is the sense that we are companions, we do this journey together, the Dzo and I, Gyatso. At intervals we stop, resting together upon the warm rocks and pleasant grass that each desires. We move. There are only a series of moments. It is supremely relaxing. There is a rhythm here. We meander from one side of the valley to the other. There is a line that we try and keep to. I always behind and farther away from the line than he. It is a strange dance, this, I the lighter, faster particle, circling, as he lumbers upwards.

There is no better word than Dance. I dance with the Dzo. We walk, we move.
The illusion of causality disappears.
It is no longer clear that the Dzo goes ahead because I chase behind.
Perhaps it is he who is leading me up the mountain.

I laugh at this paradox. There is something true about laughter. A jewel discovered.

> *Who can doubt that it must be the dzo who are being chased – for sure, he would not move up the mountain otherwise.*
> *Yet*
> *Who can doubt that the dzo is leading us – for sure I would not walk unless he went in front.*

Fieldnote:

"7 hours walk to get a sense of what 'Dzo dancing might be like. And yet, how else would it be possible to get such a sense. No amount of theory can bring this out even though no doubt, from this experience, I will theorise.

I could interview cattle herders. I could ask them questions about what it is like to herd cattle. About the changing times, about what they see as cattle herding knowledge, but I would not 'feel' this knowledge. I enjoy writing this, enjoy the swaying that inhabits me as I do so, knowledge that can only be poorly communicated, only felt. Knowledge enacted, but not verbally so. The moment allows me to feel such knowledge, only that. Feel not what an experienced dzo dancer might feel, feel only the pale shadow of what it might be like, but this is enough.

We get back to the house at the bottom of the village around 2pm, tired. I sleep a while.
In the evening, Nawang appears,

> *You didn't do your job properly, he says, smiling*
> *What?*
> *He came back?*
> *Who?*
> *The Dzo, he came back. He is there at our place.*
> *Really?*
> *He is there! He knows! He is getting old. It's cold up there this summer. He knows he can get fed here. Why to have a tough time up in the mountain?*

I hear the humour and pride in his voice – the old dzo knows.

POSTSCRIPT

The story of one day's 'data collection' in the early summer of 2005. What do I learn from this day? I talk to people, experience things in a faraway land, and through many layers of translation represent these experiences.

———

What is left from this experience?
A few photos, a few pages of fieldwork notes, written in the evening.

What is left from this experience?
The feeling of Dancing with Dzo. Memories of sounds, images. A feeling that makes me sway and want to leap from rock to rock to rock, to feel the connection between the movement of the Dzo and my own body. Knowledge brought into being in me. Not spoken of, not 'transmitted'. Knowledge that had to be danced.

What is left from this experience?
Moments lead to other moments. I write this. The path of life goes one way rather than another. Each experience takes us somewhere (not else-where). There is only the journey and the path is constituted by the data.

———

CHAPTER I

DELEUZIAN CONSTELLATIONS AND OTHER THEORETICAL ILLUSIONS

Postmodernism has taken us far enough away from ourselves to realise that our knowledge productions are simply that. In the space that has thereby been rendered visible, theory must engage in the paradoxical position that while its truths are illusory, they are the only truths that we have. Theory then, must both be taken seriously and lightly – seriously because the worlds that are produced are part of the lived realities of existence, and lightly, lest we fall prey to the illusion, to draw upon a Zen saying, that the finger pointing at the moon is the moon itself.

The first part of this chapter outlines the way that I understand the role of theory in research – as a 'productive' element that must be engaged in for us to achieve alternative conceptions of the world. In doing this, I draw upon the concept of a Rhizome (Deleuze / Guattari) as a meta-theoretical frame that allows a 'constellation' of different theoretical strand to be engaged with. In the second section, I outline the 'Critical Narrative' theoretical 'rhizome' that I have used in the research.

Chapter Outline

IA Engaging theory
Experiencing theory
Indigenous articulations
Radical uncertainties
Deleuzian Constellations

IB Rhizome
Critical narratives
Gramscian leanings
The unfolding present
Oppositional postmodernism
Buddhist resistances
Uncertain narratives

IA ENGAGING THEORY

Experiencing theory

yes, that's what a theory is, exactly like a toolbox. It has nothing to do with the signifier. A theory has to be used, it has to work. (...) You don't go back to a theory you make new ones, you have others to make.

(Deleuze, in conversation with Foucault, in Deleuze, 2004: 208)

It was one of the few words in Ladakhi that I learnt – ***'dunches'*** - to hammer - and after three days of hammering small pats of clay and cotton wool together until perfectly mixed, I understood from the blisters and aching back what Raffles (2002) meant by embodied, intimate knowledge.

I was spending a week working with a traditional sculptor making a statue for a monastery during my fieldwork to see not only how this traditional knowledge was faring, but also to see a little of the mechanisms of how this knowledge is transmitted in contemporary Ladakh. As the most junior apprentice, dunches was for me.

As I worked, I came to feel/know when the clay had been hammered enough - but the work weaved other magic too. As the rhythm of the hammer beat marked out the act of being, time slowed, days passed, and new subjectivities unfolded. The dunches-Dave that I partly became was not simply one that could 'read the clay', not simply one whose knowledge was present in his limbs as much as the head, but rather could enter a space of being-dunches, in time with the clay, awed by the small part he played in the making of a God.

And so my thoughts shifted from understanding indigenous knowledge as a practice, to one not only embodied but wrapped up in issues of subjectivity and being.

I offer this experience to place theory, not as a framework that prefigures other parts of the research process, but as something that acts in a dialectic with them, and in so doing is itself transformed - a research 'finding' as much as any other - theory as one dimension of the coming-to-know process of research.

As the academic narrative of embodiment gave meaning to the experience of those moments, so too was this academic narrative itself made meaningful only through this experience.

With knowledge being its object, its process and its product, educational research cannot but foreground issues of epistemology. There can be no easy separation of the process of knowing and that which becomes known. It is important to understand that I see no apriori theoretical framework here. Theories allow us to see, are necessary to move forwards, but the moving forward reframes the topic, and in so doing creates a series of iterations between the experiential and the theoretical – there is only a 'coming-to-know', where theory and its objects construct each other.

In his book ***'Postcolonial Imaginings',*** David Punter critiques the use of theory in postcolonial studies, the reification of frameworks, of matrices, and schemes of reference that attempt to understand colonialism in its expanse, both because of its dryness and its oversight, that, as he says 'reinscribes the colonial'.

> ***what is specifically not needed, in the West in general and in the encounter with the postcolonial in particular, is more theoretical 'frameworks' or 'matrices', which inevitably repeat a prior subjugation and exploitation, a kind of mining and transportation of natural resources inscribed at the cultural level.***
>
> ***(Punter, 2000: 9)***

I try to assemble a collection of theoretical tools for an anti-colonial project a de-colonising research. And in using them, seek to find which tools are right for the job.

But also because this theory hides the colour from the story, robs people of their political urgencies, political possibilities,

> ***My book is predicated also as a response to a certain problematic elevation of an ill-thought-out notion of 'theory', which I read as based in a stony-eyed, guilt-induced insistence on an abstract focus as a deflection from issues of both joy and loss.***
>
> ***(Punter, D., 2000: vii)***

'In sight of every reader – by, let him run naked'.
(Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1989: 47)

Punter's stance, and this particular relation to theory, is not about being anti - theoretical, nor is 'playing with theory', it is using theory very specifically to create new spaces of meaning, new connections, new fictions, new perceptions that might produce a conjuncture for further thought.

This understanding of the dialectic nature of theory and experience is something that not only places importance on the role of narrative as a mediational mechanism between them, but emphasises the productive nature of theory.

Perhaps I have been taken by the turning around to a 'productive' understanding of power in poststructuralist theory, but I have found this to be a useful trope - in emphasising both how inequalities, hegemonies are reinscribed, made afresh each moment, while at the same time offering the possibilities of our own counter hegemonic production. Production offers a space for agency – a rephrasing of the research-as-praxis where there is no simple finding out - there is only a coming-to-know where new worlds are made (possible to envision).

And so, I choose to focus upon research as a form of knowledge production throughout this thesis - the ways that theory is implicated in the understandings that can be had, the stories that will be told, the ways of knowing that will be explored, and ultimately, potentially, the types of policies that can be formulated, the educational experiences that can be had.

Indigenous articulations

I have said '*indigenous knowledge*'.

Silent, so far have been the other possible formulations – local knowledge, traditional knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), folk knowledge, alternative knowledge.

Possibilities of what can be known already begin to collapse down, some theories are already implicated, others appear on the horizon as sympathetic.

'have you ever attended a white man's presentation (often also ours) on a "native" society, be he a photographer, a filmmaker, a choreographer, a musician, a speaker, or a writer? It is as if unvaryingly, every single look, gesture, or utterance has been staying with anthropological discourse, the only discourse in power when it is a question of the (native) Other'.
(Trinh, 1989: 56)

And though not explicit yet, this conceptualisation comes prewritten with associations, colonialism already implicated, a dialectic set up, because as Maurial (1999) points out, the concept of indigeneity is ideologically loaded, that as the indigenous only constructs its *'differance'* in relation to that which is non-indigenous, it is inexorably and inevitable linked to imperialism. The indigenous and the non-local – that which *'succeeds more effectively in its translocal articulation' (Raffles, 2002: 327).*

Has anything changed since "indigenous" took over, rendering "native" obsolete?

(Trinh, 1989: 52-53)

I use the term 'articulation' from Stuart Hall, in the sense of the dynamic relationality between different conceptions of the world. This has proved useful to understand how the hegemony of western schooling in Ladakh is produced out of the 'articulation' of different discourses, practices and beliefs. It has also been a helpful way to conceptualise my theoretical approach – as a way to connect different theoretical ideas that, in their articulation, allow for productive tensions between them.

I offer no definition of indigenous knowledge, though many have tried,

knowledge arising from a long-term occupancy of a place.
(Sefa Dei 2002: 339)

The local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society
(Warren et al, 1995: xv)

knowledge that is local, holisitic, agrapha
(Maurial, 1999: 63)

Any knowledge held more or less collectively by a population, informing understanding of their world
(Sillitoe, 2002: 9)

I do not seek definition because the tension between the desire to show a commonality of perspective inherent within a definitional project, and the desire to be cognisant and respecting of the situated and diverse nature of indigenous knowledge casts doubt of how such an ambition might be able to be coherent with, and so sympathetic to, indigenous knowledge.

Indeed, Kathari (2002) notes that the desire for universal definitions of indigenous knowledge are part of a 'systemic' conceptualisation of indigenous knowledge that make it open to interpretation as something closed and unique, that can be seen as a continuing colonisation of indigenous peoples. Gough and Gough, in a similar vein point out,

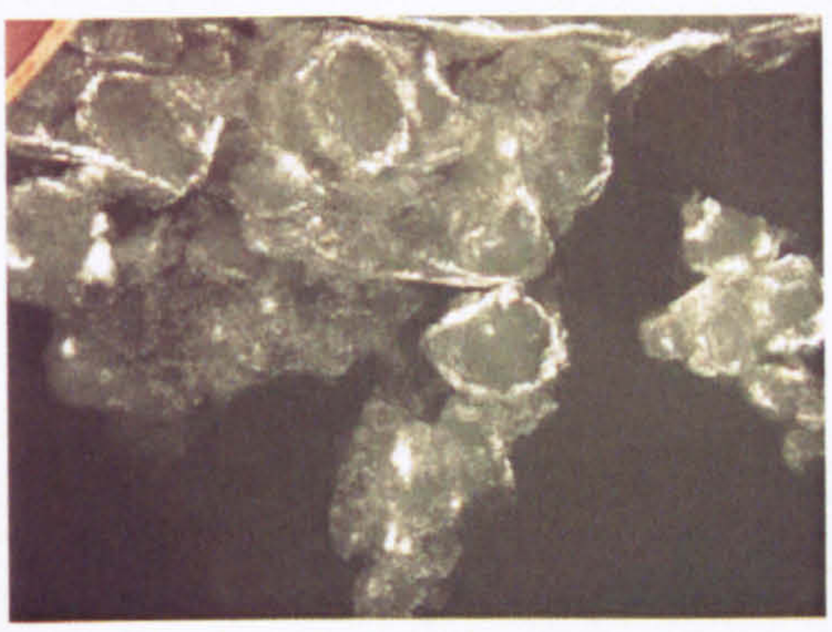
> *the persistent habit amongst Western scholars of reducing 'traditional ecological knowledge' and its acronym to a grammatical singular (that) rhetorically reduces traditional ecological knowledges to a unitary, undifferentiated, homogenised and objectified Other.*
>
> *(Gough & Gough 2003: 8)*

And so, rather than offering a definition, I make explicit the meanings that I am wish it to have, namely, that indigenous knowledge,

> *embodies a central condition of many Local Knowledges vis-à-vis the western/scientific knowledge establishment – that of being marginalised but resisting or with the potential to resist this process.*
>
> *(Kathari, 2002: 225)*

But I would also wish to add the idea of the 'intimate' to the indigenous, through the work of Raffles (2002). Raffles uses this term to offer a conceptualization of indigenous knowledge as,

> *'intimate knowledge', emphasising how people enter into relationships among themselves and with nature through embodied practice; how it is through these relationships that they come to know nature and each other and have relationships, the knowledge and the practice are always mediated not only by power and discourse but by affect.*
>
> *(Raffles, 2002: 326)*



This conceptualisation emphases the experiential, the personal – populating, if you will, the political. Drawing our attention to mechanisms whereby the experiences of some (often people in the South) are denied, while that of others (often westerners) are given credibility.

I am with Kathari and Raffles in declaring that it is precisely in the understanding of indigenous knowledge as situated and fragmented, a non essentialised, indigenous knowledge that can only be understood in relation to western knowledge, that offers the possibility of critique. A form of indigenous standpoint perspective.

This is uncertain territory – should I not seek instead, to blur the line, give narratives of hybridity - isn't 'indigenous' overly essentialist for such a thesis? And yet, as Stuart Hall notes,

> *Having refused the binarism which is intrinsic to essentialism, you have to remind yourself that binaries persist. You questioned them theoretically but you haven't removed their historical efficacy. Just because you say there is no absolute distinction between black and white doesn't mean that there aren't situations in which everything is being mobilised to make an intractable difference between black and white (...) The binary is the form of the operation of power, the attempt at closure: power suturing language. It draws frontiers: **you** are inside, but **you** are out.*
>
> *(Hall 1997: 35 quoted in Rojek, 2003: 6)*

Tsewang Tashi, Untitled No.1

Much of the language of contemporary social science moves us away from lines. We see lines as that which constrain, that which limits – lines as borders, boundaries. So, we talk instead of the liminal, of border crossing, of hybridity, of transgression.

And yet
I choose to draw a line here
between the indigenous and the non - indigenous.

I wish to renarrate the line from the perspective of the postmodern. I wish to relocate the line into a different landscape, where it is placed where I choose to place it – a line whose mark on the landscape is not so much faint, as feint – a tentative inscription to guide me through the unchartered landscape of the research.

And so, I choose to draw the line here. I retain indigeneity, rather than offering a deft theoretical manoeuvre that might, perhaps hide from view the ways that the line is shifting. I retain indigeneity in order to retain the colonial here. But this indigeneity is not an essentialist one – I hold it lightly as a heuristic, to give a vantage point to see from, a vantage point that is 'troubled' even as it is used in order to allow it to be renarrated in ways that can foreground its contemporary significance.

(I am) Seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the "obsolete" handloom Weaver (...) from the enormous condescension of posterity

(E.P. Thompson, 1968: 13 in Crehan, 2002: 98)

This is one of my favourite photos from Ladakh – the edge of Saboo village, showing, not only the line between life and non-life, but also its human creation.

But it is not up to me to give a generalisation of Ladakhi life. Here is an introduction to a paper given by a Ladakhi academic - Nawang Tsering Shakspo (Shakspo, 2004)

> **Vegetation in Ladakh is spare. The land is rocky, mountainous, inhospitable desert and less than 5% has been cultivated. Himalayan mountains limit the amount of rainfall in the region to less than 5 inches/annum (4 of which fall as snow) and the Ladakhis are dependent on streams coming from melting glaciers of water. The fields are small and very often terraced to allow for easy irrigation.**
>
> **Most Ladakhis live in small agricultural communities where they are almost self sufficient. To the east in the Changthang area nomadic communities are found who relay on sheep, goats and Yak for their livelihood.**
>
> **The town of Leh and Kargil have evolved from being important trading post on the roots to Punjab and Kashmir in the west to Tibet in the east or Yarkend and Sinkiang in the north. The Ladakhis have a short but warm summer when they are very busy cultivating the staple food of barley.. They also grow vegetables, apricots and apples.**
>
> **Trees which are usually of willow, two varieties of poplar, the pencil cedar or Juniper, locally called Shukpa are indigenous and are very precious and are used in building constructions, making of images and ornamental carvings.**

All life dependent not only on the glacial streams, but on the ingenuity of past generations who have developed the complex system of irrigation channels that allow this to be possible, dependent too on systems of maintenance and repair, and the fragile systems of passing on such embodied knowledge from one generation to the next. I can think of few other examples that so aptly attest to the contemporary significance of indigenous knowledge, of the importance of liberating indigenous knowledge from the past.

> ***I do not romanticise the local, the South, or the periphery. I do not romanticize, I take sides.***
>
> ***(Santos, 1998: 138)***

The foundation is set, we can proceed – I take sides with indigenous knowledge. I search for ways of theorising that are sympathetic to indigenous knowledge. I look for theoretical tools that might produce decolonised knowledge of my research problem. I search for ways of understanding how western knowledge remains hegemonic, so that I can construct knowledge otherwise. Here are two commentators on the subject,

> ***invoking the universal is the commonest strategy for enjoining obedience, commanding respect and legitimating one's own particular worldview***
>
> ***(Bourdieu, 1992: 54)***

And,

> *A key to comprehending the power of Western science involves its ability to depict its finding as universal knowledge. Modernist science produced universal histories, defines civilisation, and determines reality: such capabilities legitimate particular ways of seeing, and concurrently delegitimate others. Such ability is imperialistic, as it operates to characterise indigenous knowledge as inadequate and inferior.*
>
> *(Semali et al, 1999:29)*

But perhaps the most elaborated attempt to elucidate the articulation of hegemony of western knowledge is to be found in the work of De Sousa Santos, who outlines five 'logics of hegemonic rationality' (Santos, 2004), given here on the side.

Each articulation of hegemony, offering a direction for counter hegemony - the possibility to construct knowledge otherwise. New points of departure are formed.

> *Instead of the universal, the situated, the particular*
> *Instead of the certain, the uncertain, the partially known*
> *Instead of the objective, the personal, the embodied, the subjective and the affective*
> *Instead of the eternal, the temporal, the momentary*
> *Instead of western theory, Eastern theory*
> *Instead of the linear, the circular*
> *Instead of the separation, the whole*

With these directions laid before us, we are almost ready to set off collecting theories that we can use for decolonising research. But before we can do this, two tasks remain. First, how might we relate to different ideas in a way that does not simply end up finding incommensurability and conflict, and relatedly, what ontological landscape can be found for these ideas that would allow them to meet, merge, work productively together.

The five logics of hegemonic rationality

The first derives from the monoculture of knowledge and rigor of knowledge (...) turning modern science and high culture onto the sole criteria of truth and aesthetic quality, respectively.

The second logic resides in the monoculture of linear time, the idea that history has a unique and well-known meaning and directions. This meaning and direction have been well formulated in different ways in the last two hundred years, modernization, development and globalization.

The third logic is the logic of social classification, based on the monoculture of naturalization of differences. It consists in distributing populations according to categories that naturalize hierarchies. (...) According to this, nonexistence is produced as a form of inferiority.

The forth logic of production of non-existence is the logic of the dominant scale: the monoculture of the universal and the global: according this the scale that adopted as the primordial determines the irrelevance of all other possible scales. In western modernity, the dominant scale appears under two different forms: the universal and the global.

The fifth logic of non existence is the logic of productivity. It resides in the monoculture of the criteria of capitalist productivity and efficiency, which privileges growth through market forces.

(Santos, 2004: 15-17)

Radical uncertainties

> *the world seems (among other things) to goes on an eternal struggle between two fundamental tendencies of being: its will (entropic) to make things uniform, to dissolve and blend together all of its particular expressions and homogenise itself entirely; and its creative or creatorial (antientropic) will to defend, strengthen, and cultivate the uniqueness of all its richly varied manifestations and to develop them in the creation of ever higher (more structured) forms.*
>
> *(Vaclav Havel, quoted in Ochs: 2001: 17)*

Please take two steps with me. The second is the important one. Mostly we take only the first and do not see to the wide spaces beyond, remain bound within an imperialist anthropological discourse as they encounter the 'Other'.

In the first (we might call this constructivism) we are freed from the idea that our (western) knowledge is truth, while the knowledge of 'Others' is inferior, wrapped up with myth, superstition, inferior, delegitimised. We move forward, towards the Other, are able to understand non-western knowledge as an

alternative knowledge construction – an alternative that we might seek to understand, explore, categorise, and appreciate.

But if we will take a second step, a sideways step, (a step that we might call postmodernism), we are able to look back reflexively and see how we have been looking at the other from our own narrow perspective all along – understanding/judging the other in our own terms.

———

I once heard an academic say something like,

> ***the purpose of social science is to move from models that give us 80% explanation of phenomena, to giving more like 100% explanation for things that we see.***

Would you wish to be explained? Maybe I should explain him, and see how he likes it!

———

In the second step, we become aware, finally, of the limitations of our knowing of the Other. This is uncertain territory – mediating the sensitivities, as a white western man researching indigenous knowledge in Ladakh.

And so, while I proceed cautiously, reflexively, taking care not be too certain about what I know, there is also an overcoming – a transformative path to new non-western ways of seeing the world that might perhaps give a different vantage point as I circle around my research problem.

And so, while I draw upon Western theoretical thought – Gramsci, Foucault, Deleuze, Narrative theory, I have also heavily used Buddhist philosophy as 'indigenous theory' - Ladakh, and Bhutan being Tibetan Buddhist areas.

———

> ***Somewhere between a colonial 'Other' that is made object, thereby knowable, and a colonial 'Other' that is made exotic, thereby unknowable, lies hope - sufficient similarity to be understandable, sufficient difference for solidarity, friendship, humanity. Ladakh must remain a world that is both known and unknown not only to me – but let us remember, to Ladakhis too; not only sufficiently known to speak, but sufficiently unknown not to speak too certainly.***

———

It is important therefore to remember that there is no essential culture of the 'Other' that is somehow known by people within it, unknown to me, waiting to be understood – and there is no 'breaking through', to rephrase Geertz, only people each with their own personal knowledge.

———

The only certainty was that something was to happen at the monastery in Saboo village on Saturday – a monk was going to give a teaching. So I asked around to find out what was going on....

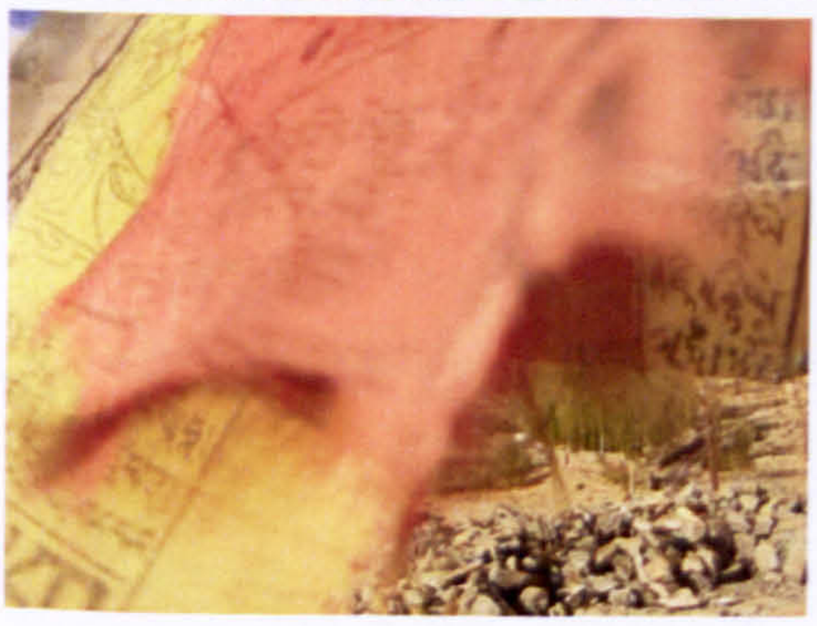
———

There is no knowledge in general as there is no ignorance in general. What we ignore is always ignorance of a certain way of knowing, and vice versa; what we know is always knowledge vis-à-vis a certain form of ignorance. Every act of knowing is a trajectory from a point A that we designate as ignorance to a point B that we designate as knowledge (...) Within the project of modernity we can distinguish two forms of knowledge: knowledge-as-regulation, whose point of ignorance is called chaos, and whose point of knowledge is called order, and knowledge-as-emancipation, whose point of ignorance is called colonialism and whose point of knowledge is called solidarity.'
(Santos, 1998: 128)

'under a veneer of acceptance, the Other's knowledge is translated into familiar cultural forms in ways that construct it as possessing knowable characteristics able to be apprehended and controlled. These processes of Othering at once work to domesticate and subsume, while simultaneously separating and regulating the boundaries, preserving integrity and authority of western science.'
(Gough & Gough, 2003: 12).

'Cultures are monolithic, only when seen from the outside or from afar'
(Santos, 2004: 134)

It'll start at 9am / It's a one off talk he's giving, because he's worried about the state of Buddhism in the village / It'll start at 11am / He's giving a series of talks because they have just finished a new room in the monastery for the public / He's giving a series for talks for the children, to give them some of the basics of Buddhism.



If we reject an essential cultural category of Ladakhi, we embrace a radical uncertainty – another double step, if you will – not only in terms of my uncertainty to know, but also in terms of the Ladakhi ability to know for certainty too.

These are, after all, not obvious questions I am asking people - how has your village changed? how has schooling affected life in the village? – and I am not looking to triangulate opinion, through different research methods to construct the mirage of some mythological 'local opinion', not looking to write – 'that's what people think in Ladakh, but rather to trace some of the flows of history, to understand the unfolding moment, and how perhaps it might unfold differently, in ways that are less violent to indigenous knowledge.

In the research, in many ways we converge for a while, Ladakhis and I – each trying to make sense of the complexities of the changes that they face. We have different vantage point – I have the luxury to spend time considering such things, they have unparalleled experience, alternative ways of knowing that are unavailable to me.

I have no grand claims about speaking for 'Others', or even to allow the silent voices of others to speak – for their stories are always, inevitably mediated by me. All I can do is to speak with compassion and hope from the view afforded me in the encounter.

We are both inscribed by colonialism – Ladakhis and I – in different ways, and must both speak with our different histories, and if we can, in our speaking and writings shed off some of that weight, then much has been done. Perhaps, in our different unknowings, there is the possibility of solidarity of a shared humanity, a blurring of the line that has been drawn between us.

Deleuzian Constellations

In the search for a way to understand ideas in a way that would allow me to draw upon various different literatures in a productive way, the idea of a constellation has become a useful metaphor for understanding my own relationship to theory.

The plough, dig dipper, Ursa Major, amongst other stars

Many years ago now, I remember learning that the constellations that we use to find coherence in the night sky have only our perspective to link them. Not only can we understand constellations as social constructions in our naming of them, meanings ascribed to them, but at a deeper level, the constellations have no physical 'reality' - the stars that make up a given constellation may be derived from many differing galaxies, millions of light years apart, travelling in different directions.

What brings them to order, gives them coherence as 'constellation' is only our own earthly perspective that we bring.

———

And so, I see my task here to constellate theories – to bring different theoretical ideas together. A theoretical constellation that is not singular – but multi-sited, articulated – one whose coherence is not essential but needs to be expressed, constructed with spaces between, allowing for the productive tensions to be made visible.

This is itself an attempt at a counter hegemonic move – to look for multiplicities, partialities – not searching for a singular framework that will give one form of knowing, but a multiple one that will produce contrasting, partial, overlapping understandings, where the limitations of each can be witnessed.

———

> *A maoist told me: "I can see why Sartre is on our side, for what and why he is involved in politics; and you, I can even see why you do it, since you've always considered imprisonment a problem. But Deleuze, really, I don't see it." His question took me totally by surprise, because it's crystal clear to me.*
>
> *(Foucault, in conversation with Deleuze, in Deleuze, 2004: 206)*

———

I came across Deleuze when looking in a store for a book on Derrida, the apparent serendipity of which, Deleuze would no doubt have smiled at, even as he launched into an analysis of the ways that fashions in academic theories, of bookshop layout, of academic classification, of the economies of publishing, of French surnames, have combined to make this apparent occurrence seem coincidental.

———

Deleuze came after thinking about constellations, and in the collaboration with Guattari, ***A Thousand Plateaus (1987),*** found resonance - was an expression of this and more. The world of A Thousand Plateaus is a fantastical one filled with concepts and connections – territorialisation, assemblage, body without organs, war machine, nomadic thought. I have only explored/understood a fraction of this - take some things from this book, selectively, what seemed useful. I think they would be happy with this – would resist the idea that their ideas needed to be taken en masse

as a new form of truth. Here is the opening to chapter 3, to give a feeling of the style of the text,

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> *The same professor challenger who made the Earth scream with his pain machine, as described by Arthur Conan Doyle, gave a lecture after mixing several textbooks on geology and biology in a fashion befitting his simian disposition. He explained that the Earth – the Deterritorialized, the Glacial, the Giant Molecule – is a body without organs. The body without organs is permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles.*
>
> *(Deleuze, Guattari, 1987: 45)*

The book takes the concept of a Rhizome, as a way to think about knowledge. I think of it as an ontological landscape for ideas, where all ideas situate themselves in relation, ultimately, to every other idea.

> *Unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to the same nature? It brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states. The rhizome is reducible neither to the one nor the multiple. (...) It is composed not of units, but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion.*
>
> *(Deleuze, Guattari, 1987: 23)*

A rhizome has no beginning or end? It is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, **intermezzo**. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree impose the verb "to be", but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunctions, "and...and...and..."
(Deleuze, Guattari 1987:27, emphasis in original)

The anti-arborescent ontological landscape of the rhizome is a useful one here for a variety of different reasons. Perhaps principally, it offers a landscape to place western and indigenous knowledge within, where the possibility of hierarchy dissolves and, in their different locatedness, we can see the power that would separate them operate more clearly.

But the rhizome is also useful, in a similar way to that of articulation. Different theoretical ideas are not discrete – the idea of a paradigm, from this perspective, becomes a matter of construction, of power – all ideas are ultimately connected, even as their underground connections remain hidden from view.

Here, in an interconnected world, newness only has meaning in the way that we are able to make new connections, draw new lines between – revolution as new ways of connecting the world.

In this spirit, I now go onto outline the theoretical rhizome that I have used in this research, precisely to find new ways of understanding my research questions, for ultimately,

> *The question is not: is it true? But: does it work? What new thoughts does it make it possible to think? What new emotions does it make it possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body?*
>
> *(Brian Massumi, in translators preface to Deleuze and Guattari, (1989): xv-xvi)*

IB RHIZOME

Critical narratives

And so, within this ontological landscape of thought that Deleuze and Guattari offer, I now offer a particular rhizomic construction - a constellation of theoretical ideas that merge, articulate, produce. I hope that they will seem familiar to you. It is not that I introduce them here for the first time (they have been present all along, in some form, connected, infused as they are), rather this is where now each one is gazed upon in turn.

It is a bit impersonal simply to call my rhizome, '***rhizome***', so I shall call it '***Critical Narrative***' or perhaps, following the biological tradition that Deleuze and Guattari draw from, '***Narrans Criticus***', though I suspect that they might not support such a naming – with its arboreal connotations (main branch: Narrans, Sub branch: Criticus), and the privilege this gives to the narrative over the critical. Perhaps, however, this would be taking these altogether too seriously – which our two characters certainly do not.

I digress, for a moment, into another Derridean impulse to detour around the critical. There is a double meaning here that I wish to de – conflate, in order to make each visible for a moment.

Critical 1 - In the first meaning, these narratives are seen as critical insofar as they operate within a critical tradition (drawing upon Gramsci, Foucault, Deleuze) and are critical of the relevance of western education paradigms in Ladakh – a tradition that, as Santos (2005) expresses, are concerned with going beyond what is simply present to envision new worlds.

Critical 2 – In the second meaning, these narratives are understood as important, as critical, right now, to be heard.

Narrans Criticus has only two terms, and this must, for now, stand in for the merging of two trajectories – the critical, with its emphasis of power on inequalities, hegemonies and the narrative of experience, of the human, the aesthetic.

These are trajectories that usually go in opposing directions – that of the critical creating intellectual worlds populated by concepts, while narrative has been largely used to give voice to personal trauma, which is enables so well. Perhaps this is why the thousand plateaus appeals so - it is a peopled critique; certainly finding new forms of critical endeavour is my ambition.

I see the fruitfulness of a critical narrative approach to bridge these two worlds (Crossley, 2000) where narrative gives a way to conceptualise the operations of power at the level of human experience – how dominant narratives (of development, of education, of globalisation) not only impact upon the unfolding of everyday lives, but do so at the level of experience.

The post-colonial critic, Gayatri Spivak, is sometimes referred to as a 'Marxist-feminist-deconstructivist'. (Kapoor, 2004). This montage is not suggesting that these contrasting approaches can be fully interwoven into a grand analytic project but rather that these strands form a 'critical interdisciplinarity' where each highlights the strengths and limitations of each.

The critical analysis of what exists lies in the assumption that existence does not exhaust the possibilities of existence, and that there are, therefore, alternatives capable of overcoming what is criticizable in what exists. The discomfit, nonconformism, or indignation vis-á-vis what exists inspires the impulse to theorise its overcoming.'
(Santos, 1998: 122)

There is another way to understand this bridging process too - as being part of an endeavour that runs through much of contemporary social science – to formulate a new direction for critical social science, in response to postmodern challenges.

Each of the parts of this constellation is, in its own way present because it offers a different movement towards this ambition.

Gramsci, for his cultural Marxism – an emphasis on the contingency of the everyday
Santos, for his development of an oppositional postmodernism
Deleuze for an ontological thought space that reconfigures the critical project
Buddhism, for an emancipatory agenda based on the illusory nature of our constructions that trap us
Narrative theory, for offering us the landscape for such work to take place

'Conventional sociology, both in its positivist and antipositivist guises, manages to make acceptable, as remedy for the crisis of sociology, the critique of critical sociology. In the case of positivist sociology, this critique is based on the idea that the methodological rigour and social usefulness of sociology presuppose that it concentrate on the analysis of what exists and not on alternatives to what exists; in the case of antipositivist sociology, on the idea that social scientists cannot impose their normative preferences because they lack the privileged viewpoint that would allow them to do so.'

(Santos, 298: 124)

A traditional 'theoretical framework' might find unforgivable tensions here – how might we reconcile a call for uncertainty with a call for counter hegemony – how might we, for instance, ever recognise a counter hegemonic moment? But this is the beauty of Deleuze and Guattari – offering a new landscape for ideas to roam around on - a landscape of the in-betweens – of partiality of connection – that refuses the idea of incommensurability as being simply a political device to silence an ecology that would see revolutionary thinking as being held within the new connections that can be formed.

Gramscian leanings

In a thesis working with more arborescent metaphors, Gramsci would be placed here as a root, or possibly as a foundation, rather than as part of this assemblage. We have met him before most prominently in terms of a conceptualisation of hegemony and counter hegemony, but also with the help of Kathari, in the move towards a 'subaltern' conceptualisation of 'indigenous knowledge' that, in its locatedness, partiality, contextuality gives counter hegemonic potential. Present too in the work of Santos, in his conceptualisation of the '5 logics of hegemonic rationality'.

My reading of Gramsci is principally framed through Crehan (2002), who in her book 'Gramsci, Culture and Anthropology' looks at the potential use of Gramscian ideas for anthropology, signalling the increasing popularity of Gramscian and neo-Gramscian approaches. But if Gramsci was interested in culture, it was not the same culture as understood by the anthropologist or the sociologist? For Gramsci, the world was not one shaped by a tension between tradition and modernity, but one shaped by power, and as such culture was not reified as some form of idealised pre-industrial state, but rather, at least in part, how class realities are lived.

For my own sake, Gramsci is valuable firstly, for the breadth of his writing (that one might argue prefigures a Deleuzian preoccupation with the multiplicities of understandings), that create ways of tracing critical thought into new cultural spaces -

literature, folklore, linguistics, education, the role of the intellectual.

But more than this, Gramsci offers a direction of gaze that, during my fieldwork, made him a constant companion, continually reminding me 'but what are you looking at?' what can you see?'

———

It is unsurprising therefore, that Gramsci chose the study of folklore as a fruitful area of study and would imagine that he might understand the study of 'indigenous Knowledge' to be a similar endeavour. His view of folklore was complex, because he saw it both as often a mechanical adoption of the conceptions of the world, a cultural adoption of the past hegemonic ideas, a simple 'common sense', but also potentially oppositional conceptions of the world, a,

> ***confused agglomerate fragments of all the conceptions of the world and of life that have been succeeded one another in history.***
>
> ***(Gramsci, 1985: 194, quoted in Crehan, 2002: 108)***

Folklore in this understanding becomes both a history of past discursive struggles, and a repository for oppositional thinking.

———

Gramsci spends much time discussing the role of intellectuals in this process of engagement with 'folklore', (an issue that is pertinent to all of us working in social science), understanding that the subordinated position of the subaltern shaped how they experienced the world, and so limited their ability to produce coherent accounts of their lived realities in ways that were able to produce counter hegemonic accounts of the world.

While he saw this task falling to the intellectual, I am uncomfortable assigning such a role for myself – being sceptical of my ability to rise above the position that I find myself is greater than anyone else's. I rather read his 'organic intellectual', linked to a particular class, to be a reminder of the importance of intellectual workers to be committed, not only to their ideas, and their struggles, but to the people that are part of that – a position perhaps reminiscent of Santos' call to 'take sides with the South'.

This double call - for both a commitment to a group of people, and a desire to understand the realities of their lives is a way of framing intellectual work that I have sympathy with – once again prefiguring the bridging of the critical and the narrative dimensions of this work. Here is Crehan again -

> *for Gramsci any would-be revolutionaries need to understand the cultural realities they are bent on transforming, apart from any other reason because counter hegemonies, capable of challenging in an effective way the dominant hegemony, emerge out of the lived reality of oppressed peoples day-to-day lives. Any such embryonic counter hegemony would, as he saw it, necessarily emerge as an incoherent jumble requiring the work of intellectuals to provide it with coherence and intellectual rigour, but unless they engaged with such raw material those intellectuals, no matter how brilliant and committed, were doomed to irrelevance'*
>
> *(Crehan, 2002: 5)*

Finally, and above all, Gramscian thinking offers a fertile ground for the development of lines of research, directs our gaze toward,

> *what aspects of an indigenous knowledge can be counter hegemonic, how can the personal and intimate aspects of indigenous knowledge be understood? How do dominant forms of knowledge become hegemonic? How can the radical alterity of the other be known without appropriation? How am I as a western academic and science teacher implicated in this process? Can western theoretical knowledge be useful in the production of counter hegemonic knowledge? What are the ethical ways to proceed with the research?*

The Unfolding Present

> Occasionally we come face to face with bits of the past. For me this happened when my Aunt, doing some research into my Mothers side of the family, came across a draft of a talk my Great Great Aunt gave to the local Women's Institute about the work of her brother, a missionary, in India, based on the letters he had written her.
>
> ---
>
> Knowing that this person was a family member makes it more fascinating, perhaps also easier to give a sympathetic reading of it and forgive it the colonial mixture of condescension and virtuous giving.
>
> ---
>
> This is the language of development – of the helping of the other – the great deceit upholding unequal relations. We in the west find it easy to configure our relations with the developing world as, well, 'development', helping, a given 'good', a intrinsic break with the bad old past of colonial days, yet for those in the 'South', this is not so obvious. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, in her critique of the place of western research in colonial encounters, 'Decolonising Methodologies', writes,
>
> > *Many critiques of research have centred around the theory of knowledge known as empiricism and the scientific paradigm of positivism which is derived from empiricism. (...) most indigenous criticisms of research are express within the single terms of 'white research', 'academic research', or 'outsider research'. The finer details of how western scientists might name themselves are irrelevant to indigenous peoples who have experienced unrelenting research of a profoundly exploitative nature*
> >
> > *(Smith, 1999: 42)*
>
> ---
>
> There is a link here - a trajectory of colonialism that constructs these encounters, a connections too of the power of self deceit, the danger of taking as good that which is felt to be so. A reminder of what happens under the guise of the good.
>
> ---

We could call this many things – colonialism, self deception – but perhaps the most meaningful is the Foucauldian concept of a dominant discourse. Within this concept, the connections are easier to see.

Two Americans and I meet in a guest house – one a nun, the other... 'has his own work', she says. I look to him with an inquiring look. 'I'm into IT'. 'We are putting Tibetan documents up on the internet for everyone to have access to – there are some special documents that I am getting that are closed in the personal libraries of some monks – they get passed own from one incarnation to the next.' I know of these collections, know too that 'closed' has a meaning – closed because some texts are considered powerful – only to be accessed by monks of a certain level of development. This is perhaps not easy for a westerner to understand – if I give a degree level book to a primary school student, it might not be comprehensible, but certainly not dangerous – but Buddhism is not western knowledge – there are psychological, spiritual dangers lurking here amongst the possibilities. 'But some of these books are not available.. how will you get hold of them...' I ask. He smiles a smile of complicity 'I have my ways. I will get them'.

I am left feeling chilled by this – the naivety, the power, the fact that as Buddhists, they of all people should be respectful of the ways of understanding religious texts, surely? Chilled by the dominance of western values of freedom, chilled by the lack of respect, by the apparent joy with which this violence is being wrought. Of course, I do not know the end of the story – there no doubt was resistance here – and yet, there is power too.

I meet a group of French people in a guesthouse – on their way to Nubra, Eastern Ladakh. "we are visiting a school that we sponsor", one says. She names the school, a private school. I know of it, have witnessed the ways that such schools, built in populated areas grow at the expense of village government run ones that are closing down. She proudly says how they have funded a school bus to allow pupils from the neighbouring villages to come in easily. I think of the village schools that will soon lose half their numbers, become unsustainable. 'How did you choose which school to sponsor', I ask through almost gritted teeth (holding onto a research identity for dear life 'there are plenty of government schools around', I say, 'it is a serious school she replies'. I think of the village schools that are made unserious by such interventions.

Breakfast Theory: A MORNING METHODOLOGY

From In These Times, *the weekly newspaper.*

(Reid, 1989)

' the description of a statement does not insist therefore in rediscovering the unsaid whose place it occupies; nor how one can reduce it to a silent, common text; but on the contrary in discovering what special place it occupies, what ramifications of the system of formations make it possible to map its localization, how it is isolated in the general dispersion of statements'

(Foucault, 1969: 135)

Rereading the writing from my Great Great Aunt, I am struck by what I might have become in a different age. Trinh T. Minh-ha and Linda Tuhiwai Smith write in critique of the western intellectual, and so they should – but perhaps there is space for compassion, for understanding that we are all trapped, at least in part by dominant discourses.

Of course, I am not filled with compassion for the French group, nor is my dispassionate research identity strong enough, I begin to explain to the lady the effects that her giving is having, but of course she does not want to hear. I wouldn't.

The colonial past is present in us all – in the English speakingness of Ladakh, in the institution of VSO the organisation I worked in Bhutan through, in the images and narratives of the Himalayas that filled my childhood. This is there. We cannot escape it, only acknowledge it, embrace it, attempt to overcome it, see the encounter as one that can be transformative. Understand that colonialism was a discourse that went both ways, affected both sides, something that both must recover from.

I move here of course around discourses and genealogies – the territory constructed by Foucault. I could perhaps have remained solely with Foucault – understanding western and non western knowledge as alternative discourses - comparing their material aspects, their shifting grounds, but I wanted to include other things too – more experiential, but subjective, more peopled narratives. Foucault remains a point of reference, one part of this rhizome – present not only in the ways that I analyse the role of hegemonic discourse of development and educational, but in the need to give a genealogical analysis of the place of the past in understanding contemporary situations.

But if the past is important in poststructuralist thought, it is so in the productive role it plays in the unfolding moment of now - the world is constantly made anew, powerful discourses must constantly be reinscribed to be maintained – the past is appropriated as part of the discursive battles of the present.

And so, within the discourse of development, within the hegemony of the future (that enters in), indigenous knowledge is associated with the past, while western knowledge all that might be better.

As I write this, I am on the other side of the iron curtain of my youth. I am in Hungary, my wife Hungarian, our small house in the hills of the small Hungarian border town of Kõszeg. Two km behind the house is the old road that traces this curtain across the hill. Perhaps it is this, but I come back to the novelist Milan Kundera. In exploring his themes of power and of resistance, he attributes a special place for the role of the past, and, like Foucault, sees it, rather than the present or the future, as the space where discursive battles are fought.

> *We want to be masters of the future, only for the power to change the past. We fight for access to the labs where we can retouch photos and rewrite biographies and history.*
>
> *(Kundera, 1996: 30)*

What Foucault offers is the importance of the past. What Kundera adds, reminds us, is that the past is always possible to be remembered, can be, as for Gramsci be a source of counter hegemonic potential, if it allowed to be.

Oppositional Postmodernism

The starting point for De Sousa Santos' Oppositional Postmodernism is the realisation that while world problems are modern ones, the solutions are postmodern (Santos, 1998). His subsequent development of a postmodern critical theory is based on twin sociologies - the sociology of absences that

> *consists of an inquiry that aims to explain that what does not exist is in fact actively produced as nonexistent, that is, as a noncredible alternative to what exists.*
>
> *(Santos, 2004: 14)*

and the sociology of emergences that aims to

> *transform impossible into possible objects, absent into present objects.*
>
> *(Santos, 2004: 14-15)*

There is much that could be written here, much already written. Let me focus here on the silences.

There is a far off, almost mythological part of Ladakh, called Changtang – this is where the nomads who look after the sheep that produce the Pashmina wool live. Film crews often go there making documentaries. The fabled pashmina, the passage of which through Ladakh has been fought over for centuries (see Rizvi (1999) for an account of this)

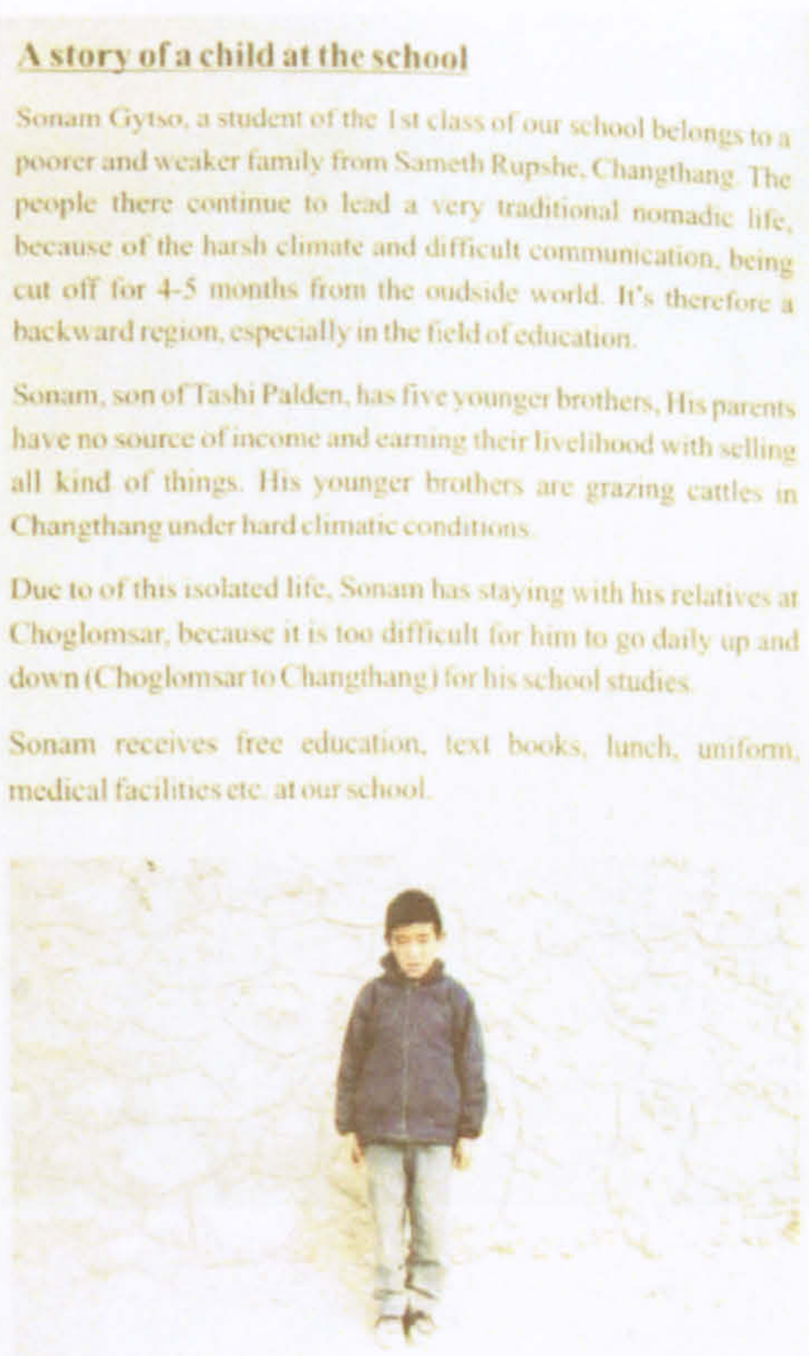
Looking at this school leaflet, there is no knowledge (it appears) in Changtang – no school, no knowledge – the children of Changtang need to come to the big city to get educated. Is this more acceptable because this silencing is being done by Ladakhis, in the name of poverty reduction?

> *The first line of defence that most people offer when faced with my rhetoric of the ill effects of schools in developing countries is, 'but what is the alternative?'*
> *'Exactly' is often my reply, though I am not sure that this is very convincing.*

> *Silence is, therefore a construction that asserts itself as the symptom of a blockade, a potentiality that cannot be developed.*
>
> *(Santos: 1998: 131)*

New worlds need to be written.
More appropriate educational models need to be developed.
Ways of bringing up children need to be developed that are sympathetic to local values, beliefs, knowledge, problems, understandings.

Yet, still, amazingly, in the 21st century, years after colonialism supposedly ended, there are only schools that recycle western knowledge. Why is there no outcry here? The silence is deafening. There are only calls for more schools.



A story of a child at the school

Sonam Gytso, a student of the 1st class of our school belongs to a poorer and weaker family from Sameth Rupshe, Changthang. The people there continue to lead a very traditional nomadic life, because of the harsh climate and difficult communication, being cut off for 4-5 months from the oudside world. It's therefore a backward region, especially in the field of education.

Sonam, son of Tashi Palden, has five younger brothers, His parents have no source of income and earning their livelihood with selling all kind of things. His younger brothers are grazing cattles in Changthang under hard climatic conditions.

Due to of this isolated life, Sonam has staying with his relatives at Choglomsar, because it is too difficult for him to go daily up and down (Choglomsar to Changthang) for his school studies.

Sonam receives free education, text books, lunch, uniform, medical facilities etc. at our school.

Furthermore the school has many students from remote areas like Sonam Gyatso.

Our earnest request to you for your help

At present our school has about 130 children. All of them belong to poorer and weaker families from remote areas in the Ladakh region. It is planned to give the education free with all mentioned facilities to all of our students.

Therefore we need sponsors and well-wishers who are interested

Each year, billions of dollars of western money is spent promoting western knowledge in non-western countries. The fact that this is not questioned, that this is seen as a largely good thing, that the spreading of western knowledge to the farthest reaches of the globe is conflated with poverty reduction, surely attest to the ongoing success of colonialism.

There is silence.

> *A sociology of absences should explain what does not exist, as well as what does, how what does not exist is actively produced as non existent.*
>
> *(Santos, 1998: 133)*

There are silences where there should be the productive chatter of cultural creation. Where are the sounds of the alternatives?

The world unfolds, and as it does so, inequalities are reinscribed. It is not the poorest Ladakhis that are benefiting from new educational opportunities. Of course not - students of the poor remain in the villages, suffering in schools drained of resources and teachers, drained even of schools altogether, by new private schools like the one we met earlier. The suffering of these students left behind, whose lives become narratives of failure, of unrequited hope, while the world moves elsewhere remain unspoken.

> *People don't talk about their problems, we can't do that – but inside people suffer*
>
> *(interview with college graduate, Leh, Ladakh)*

> *But emergences too, are possible. New understandings can be made.*

Buddhist Resistances

If Santos draws our attention to the ways that silences are actively constructed, perhaps the quiet hangs most heavily over the possibility and use of indigenous theory. While we acknowledge that other cultures might have other alternative knowledge, the theoretical tools of academia's 'knowledge production' remain western ones – a situation that, it would seem to me, is no longer credible.

> *Today, knowledge communities are even more diasporic and dispersed, and theory travels even more swiftly across cultural zones, though the problem for a democratization of knowledge remains that of the relative dominance of particular centres and authorising procedures that continue to favour a specific western perspective; the situation underlies our argument for a radical de-centring of habitual conceptual frameworks.*
>
> *(Featherstone & Venn, 2006: 3)*

While I am very supportive of the development of 'decolonising methodologies' in social science research, it would seem that, unless we go further and look to decolonising theories, we have missed out a crucial aspect of the knowledge production process.

In this spirit, the next connection in my Rhizome is Tibetan Buddhism. Ladakh, as Bhutan, are Tibetan Buddhist communities. In Bhutan this is the state religion. In Leh district of Ladakh, apart from the main city, Leh, which has a sizable population of Muslim traders, the region is predominantly Tibetan Buddhist.

Please remember, I engage with Tibetan Buddhism as social scientist, not as a religious philosopher. I am not claiming that I offer more than the most basic touch upon Buddhism - only that its presence in critical social science is new.

While I have called this Buddhist theory, and it is theory, this is something that has been absorbed as much through the years living in Bhutan, and Ladakh, as reading texts. It's flavour – or gods, of symbols, or ritual practice, is colours – of reds and golds, and blues, its images – of demons, its ambitions – of overcoming, its feel, of irreverence, of naturalness, are not western images of Tibetan Buddhism, but that is as it should be.

For a Gramscian perspective, Tibetan Buddhism in Ladakh is both a dominant aspect of cultural life for the people whom I talked with (including being an alternative educational system for many young people) and as such, any understanding of their lives and realities cannot be complete without reference to it. But at a more epistemological level, it is also a form of 'folklore' – an indigenous, well developed, traditional, articulated mode of thought whose understandings can and do play a role in the world - making of Ladakh.

It is something to smile at – this contemporary fascination with overcoming dualisms in western thinking - because this is a deeply rooted in Buddhist thinking. Here is a verse from an anthology of the life of the 'divine madman' Drukpa Kunley (also called Kunga Legpa), who lived in the 16th century in Bhutan and Tibet.

> ***We bow at the feet of Kunga Legpa,***
> ***Possessor of the bow and arrow that slays the Ten Enemies,***
> ***Master of the hunting dog that kills dualizing tendencies***
> ***And bearer of the shield of loving kindness, passion and patience***
> ***(Dowman (translator), 2000: 37)***

There was Drukpa Kunley, wondering the villages of Bhutan, four hundred years ago, making jokes about killing dualising tendencies – and we in the west think that we are intellectually advanced!

And it does not stop there – the more I looked, the more similarities and connections I saw between Buddhist theory and Postmodern social science - with Deleuze (in its radical oneness, connectedness) with uncertainty (in its emphasis on illusion), with Santos (in its emancipatory agenda), with Foucault (its analysis of the ways that we live out the subjectivities that are imposed upon

us). And yet it adds something else to this mix – a pragmatic emphasis on a pedagogy of transformation.

The connections will be fleshed out in more detail as they are used in future chapters, but I want to just go into a more detail on three interrelated issues - on the possibility of agency and emancipation in Buddhism, on the understanding of illusion, and on the role of paradox.

Hughie and I met in Ladakh. I was there on fieldwork, he, an English guy and a practicing Buddhist, on exploration, pilgrimage. I need to thank Hughie – I owe a huge debt to him – for his friendship during that time, for his humour, and his explanations and thoughts on Buddhism.

We were talking about agency, Hughie and I. He was explaining the ambition, in Buddhism, to create a gap in the moment of experience - between the reception and the action, so that rather than simply responding to a given situation, we see things clearly 'as they are', consider them, respond to them how we wish to.

I was reminded by his explanation of the debate about postmodern agency that I had been reading. Stern (2000) had described two possible post-modern positions on human subjectivity - a 'weak' position that would situate the subject in the context of various social, linguistic and discursive practices but retaining intentional action and autonomy, and a 'strong' version that would offer a purely discursively constructed subject.

While critiques of strong positions arguing that it fails to offer a space for creative alteration or for the reflexive turn that is needed for transformation, advocates argue that without this final step, we leave untouched the ways that these heroically reflexive practices are themselves also situated in a discursive space that itself impacts upon how this reflexivity is practiced.

Written down like this, this postmodern debate looks altogether too binary, altogether too argumentative in contrast to the middle path outlined by Hughie that is not focused upon the search for the 'truth' about human nature – but rather upon the very pragmatic acceptance of things as they are and response in the direction of human growth.

> *Yes, we might say – humans tend to simply respond to the situations that we find ourselves in (strong position - we are discursively constructed). Yes, our patterning makes it difficult for us to enact differently (strong position again), but we are not bound by this – we can learn to develop our ability to understand both ourselves and our situations in order to gain agency, act differently (weak position).*

While the western academic debate focused upon competing versions of the 'truth', Buddhism focused upon transformation - on the possibility, and the mechanisms of increased agency.

In the quiet of the space between experience and response, lies the possibility of new world being made.
No - more
In the moment of experience are the infinite possibilities of response.

When I began this research, and chose to go to Ladakh, I did not realise then, what a serendipitous thing it would be to find, in Buddhism an indigenous 'postmodern emancipation' that would connect with, run alongside, the western ones that I was exploring.

Buddhism sets out an understanding of human life as suffering (samsara), that this suffering results from our own karma, and that this karma is created through the defiled nature of our own minds, which come from our clinging to self or ego (Ray, 2002).

In Tibetan Buddhism there is central place given to illusion in our inability to escape suffering - its objects, our desires, are creations (we might say constructions) of a mind 'clinging' to a false idea of reality - concepts attributed to others and ourselves - enemy, jealousy, desire – are all illusion.

In Tibetan Buddhism, this, as for Deleuze, offers a reflexive space for holding onto concepts lightly. Illusions are necessary – to live in the world we must have them, we can even use them to transform ourselves, but the problem,

> *comes not from having thoughts but from taking these thoughts as if they referred to some external objectively existing phenomena*
>
> *(Ray, 2002: 429).*

As human life is one of suffering due to our clinging to conceptual illusions, these become things to use as we progress, but ultimately to shake off, in order to see only that which has true existence - ultimate emptiness of the Buddha nature.

> *Would you say that a man is wise if, after crossing a river and seeing that there is a long way to walk on land, he puts the raft on his back and carries it rather than getting rid of it?*
>
> *(http://www.baus.org/baus/library/learn_from_b.html)*

This Buddhist line of thought is valuable here, always deconstructing, always undermining, reminding us that the seeing differently that is enlightenment is as much a mental state of experiencing differently, as it is an intellectual endeavour.

Therefore, as we move forwards, there is need to both construct and deconstruct the productions of our intellectual labours - to make (because what else is there), and to unmake (because we should remain doubtful about our works). We hold it lightly, (lest it burn or seduce), but seriously, (lest we forget its importance). It remains a necessary illusion

'Are you a Buddhist?'
The question always emerges. Is it somehow different from being asked, 'Are you a Gramscian?', 'Are you a postmodernist?'. As for these, I have sympathy, see their relevance, feel comfortable with the worlds they construct.

Uncertain narratives

> *Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with stories that we tell and hear told, with the stories that we dream or imagine or would like to tell. All these stories are reworked in that story of our own lives which we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semiconscious, virtually uninterrupted monologue. We live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meanings of our past actions, anticipating the outcomes of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed. We explain our actions in terms of plots, and often no other form of explanation can produce sensible statements.*
>
> *(Polkinghorne, 1988: 160, quoted in Lewis, 2006: 832)*

Foucault describes the relationship between his work and subjectivity thus,

'how it was possible for men, within the same discursive practice, to speak of different objects, to have contrary opinions, and to make contradictory choices; my aim was also to show in what way discursive practices were distinguished from one another; in short I wanted not to exclude the problem of the subject but to define the positions and functions the subject could occupy in the diversity of discourse.'

(Foucault, 1962: 221)

There is a turn in the social science to understand narratives to be the medium by which we experience the world, and share these experiences with others. This trend no doubt has many reasons – perhaps among them a desire to recognise in academic texts, the presence of the

> ***kind of unified, coherent and continuing self that people often feel themselves to have or to be.***
>
> ***(Day Sclater, 2003: 324)***

But this turn is not, at least in my reading a turn away from poststructuralism, but rather to add to it an understanding of the human subject as a site where social forces are played out. As Cohen and Shires note, this turn is

> *not to deny the insights and strengths of poststructuralist thought, but rather to reinsert the subject of the site of meaning and transformation.*
>
> *(Cohan and Shires, 1988: 324)*

If we understand the narrated self as a site of inscription, a narrative understanding adds to, rather than detracts from or conflicts with post-structuralist thought. As Michael Jackson, eloquently puts it,

> *no matter what constituting power we assign the impersonal forces of history language, and upbringing, the subject always figures, at the very least, as the site where these forces find expression and are played out. (...) no matter what significance we attach to discourse or culture, the phenomenal world of human consciousness and activity is never reducible to that which allegedly determines the condition of its possibility. (... the subject is) the very site where life is lived meanings are made, will is exercised, reflection takes place, consciousness finds expression, determinations take effect, and had itself formed or broken.*
>
> *(Jackson, 1996: 22)*

Jackson talks of excess – of the irreducibility of discourse to the phenomenal world. I am interested in this human excess – the experiential, the aesthetic, the empathetic, the felt and the intuited - that not only make life meaningful, but crucially in this context, the very things that I have characterised as essential components of a counter hegemonic understanding of indigenous knowledge. A writing space that is sympathetic to the rhizomic understanding that I have offered.

I suppose that at one level it is unsurprising that academics, being as they are in the business of textual production and reproduction have taken to the concept of discourse. But I wish to subvert the linguistically rooted hierarchy that would see narrative as simply one of a larger group of discursive strategies, and instead offer the opposite understanding - that discourse is just one part of narrative.

While the idea of discourse privileges the analytic categorisation, incorporates personal experience into a wider understanding, narrative takes a different directionality - where the meaning of our categorisations are only made meaningful through the lives and experiences of people.

I am sitting one day listening to two Ladakhi friends tell stories about this and then. I drift out for a moment, preoccupied, as I am with the research, am thinking about what concepts such as hegemony and resistance might mean here, when the thought that thereafter seems all too obvious strikes me – that there is no hegemony or resistance, 'outside' of the lives of people.

It is not that wider structures of power and inequality are marginalised, or underprivileged through a narrative account that focuses upon the experiences of people - quite the opposite in fact – that it is only through a close reading of the lives of people that these concepts have any meaning at all.

Narrative, in its connections to stories and so to people, exists in a peopled world, a world of contingent experiences that can embrace discursive understandings, but always go beyond them, embracing this human excess.

I therefore adopt a narrative approach to bring in this necessary excess – so that both the subtleties and complexities of understandings of the people whom I talked to in Ladakh, but also my own can find a home within this thesis.

> *Each flashback is triggered by an evocation of a sense at the time of observing, speaking, listening, and simply being there at the place of inquiry. Through events, narratives, beliefs, poems, personal communication, quotes, and the taking back and forth of such conscious and unconscious states of mind, the researcher experiences, rather that merely encounters the world.*
>
> *(Jegatheesan, 2005: 667-688)*

Where else, except within a narrative account, might research experiences, be expressed,

> *I had read books that describe how Ladakhi use dung for fuel, I had seen piles of dung drying by the sides of the houses, seen people collecting dung. Yet, even after all this, it was only when, camping one night high up in the valley about the village and having to collect dung to make tea, that I realised not only the embodied knowledge that was present in trying to make a dung fire keep alight, but the feeling that came with living in a place so barren that dung was a precious heating resource.*

We have now arrived at the self's understanding of itself at the crossroads of discourse and narration as a who of discourse in the guise of a narrating self, a homo narrans, a storyteller who both finds herself in stories already told and strives or a self constitution by plotting herself in stories in the making.
(Schrag, 1997: 26)

In Buddhism these moments of experience are called Dharmas – each moment experienced uniquely as a karmic consequence of our previous experiences.

Our lives are radically uncertain - we move through a social and interpersonal world, where we are always 'never quite sure' – what did she really mean by that? When he said this, did he really mean that? When he raised his hand to rub the back of his neck does that mean he is tense, or just tired?

I mean, we try to interpret, because that is how we communicate, but at the same time, there is always a residual uncertainty. We live in a world of probability and this is sufficient.

And yet, in research we are encouraged to go beyond ourselves.

> *to take a small part of a transcript, read and reread it, to attack it with this theoretical framework, dissect it using the full armoury of our analytic toolkit.*

But after all that, is the meaning any less uncertain?

The picture shows Manjushri, holding his 'discriminating sword that cuts through ignorance', leading people to wisdom, leading us to discover the true nature of reality.

> *His purpose was to lead beings in an inquiry whereby they could discover the true nature of reality. For that reason, he is usually depicted displaying the two tools essential to that investigation: in his right hand he wields the double-edged sword of logic or analytic discrimination and in his left, the Prajnaparamita Sutra, the text of the teaching on Emptiness. Manjushri's sword of discriminating wisdom is tipped with flames to show that it severs all notions of duality. It can cut away delusion, aversion and longing, to reveal understanding, equanimity and compassion.*
> *(http://www.khandro.net/deity_Manjushri.htm)*

There is epistemology here - fundamentally knowledge is seen not as something that is accumulated - not a pile of stuff that can grow, but rather more (as the sword says) - the going deeper and deeper and deeper into our understandings.

In the coming-to-know of my fieldwork, I cannot be sure of anything - only try to be aware of how uncertain I am. Let me share a story I was told to me by an Indian woman volunteering in Ladakh.

> *I was in Delhi you know, and walking along. There was this musician right, all dressed up, Tabla and what not he was playing, he looked like, you know a real traditional guy. This white guy went over, with a notebook, must have been doing some research or something, and they talked asked him question. He must have thought, wow, I have really found this real guy to talk to. So after I went to talk with him too, and you know, he was just dressed up, he um, was a musician and this was like, you know a 'gig'. That white guy he never new.*

There is another way in which narrative approaches connect with this rhizome – as part of new critical project in social science. Ricour (1981, 1994) one of the founding fathers of narrative approaches, shows us how narratives have two elements – in addition to the chronological elements of narratives that much narrative work emphasises, narratives also have configurational

elements – the way that we the plot significant wholes out of scattered events. This configurational aspect of narrative has important implications, for it means that events are never simply temporally located, they are always configured, already ***pre-plotted.***

Narratives, then, are not simply post-hoc stories that we use to make sense of our experiences, we can only make sense of our experiences through the narrative plottings that are available to us.

Not only do we narrate our experience, we experience in accordance with our narratives.

Considering the configurational aspect of narrative, offers us another way to understand the operation of hegemony, because 'Narrative inequality' (Hymes, 1996) not only affords some experiences the right to be narrated, while other are silenced, but because, if we accept that narratives are implicated in how we make meaning of our lives, then dominant narratives structure our very experiences.

———

And so we end this chapter, as we began it, with the dialectic between experience and theory – one now understood as mediated by narrative. I wish to continue to keep this dialectic alive - that just as I have argued throughout this chapter, that engaging in theory is essential for new understanding of experience to be available, so too would I wish to retain the possibility of experience to renarrate our academic narratives. The experiential is therefore seen as a site of production of counter narrative, and it is this spirit that a narrative approach, albeit an uncertain one, has been taken.

———

The theoretical discussions in this chapter have not been presented as a theoretical framework, but rather as a constellation of ideas that, in their connections and in their differences have fore-grounded concepts such as moment, resistance, history, transformation.

———

And yet, these ideas must remain only partially meaningful until immersed further in the experiential world of fieldwork. In the next chapter, I use the term 'living theory' – not in the sense that theory is alive but rather that it must be lived to be made meaningful. This is the next phase of the dialectic, where, in living with critical narrative 'in experience', it becomes translated, transformed. But first another poiesis.

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SECOND POIESIS

DISQUIETING THE PAST

Poiesis Outline

Prologue
Disquieting the past
Postscript

Disquieting the past

PROLOGUE

During the week that I spent in Likkir, staying with a friend, Stanzin, his great grandmother, Apile Thinley kept recurring in our conversations. At the time, I was thinking about how to locate the past and its place in understanding the contemporary situation in Ladakh. At the same time, offering an historical account was neither coherent with a post-modern reading of the past, with its troubling of the idea of a simple knowable 'before' that could simply be drawn upon, nor would it give any sense of the experiential past that, in its affect could perhaps be traced into the decisions and attitudes of the present. It was therefore an honour to meet with Apile Thinley and hear her sense of the changes of Ladakh, rooted as it is in a memory of days under colonial rule.

There are other ways that the past is present that through this account of an old lady – perhaps principally through the circulation of second hand narratives, and yet this personal account that is largely structured as a contrast between 'before' and 'after' the moment when, in 1947, the British gave up suzerainty and the state of Jammu and Kashmir acceded to the Indian Union, gives a sense of the hardship of a time that demands compassionate readings to contemporary desires for wealth and material aspects of development.

The decolonisation was to be an ambivalent one, leaving Ladakh (that had been an independent country for almost 900 years, up to 1834, when the Dogras, under the control of the Sikh empire invaded and deposed the King) with no political independence, at the farthest margins of a state that had been its former colonial administration. I leave Apile Thinley to say more,

DISQUIETING THE PAST

Ladakh has changed
Changed a lot

> *The time of the good person is before,*
> *before there were more good people.*
> *Now people are like strangers.*

Now Ladakh has changed a lot, changed because of Bakulu Rinpoche, but it is funny that people have changed to be bad.

People have lots of food now,
people have lots of money, lots of things.
People have everything they need,
maybe this is why they are bad now.

> *Before,*
> *people were not bad. In that time we were poor, very poor.*
> *We would have to take a little bit of tsampa from a neighbour and give back to them after some time – even this, even a little bit of tsampa we would have to borrow – there was not enough food, not enough clothes.*
>
> *Before people were very poor,*

Tsampa is a staple food made from roasted barley flour

Bakulu Rinpoche, who died in 2003 was a senior monk and political leader of Ladakh after Independence. He was a member of parliament, and was the Indian ambassador to Mongolia later in his life.

But now it is changed, all because of Bakulu Rinpoche, because of the monks and Bakulu Rinpoche. Bakulu, he has given lots of fields, lots of gardens to the people.

She is referring here to NGO workers

And now, every time, there is some people who work in an office, and they have other people to work for them, these people always come to the house and they come to teach something to the village.

After accession to India, a land reform act came into effect that redistributed land from wealthy families to poorer one, by putting a fixed limit to the size of landholdings. The monasteries, that had (and continue to have) vast land holding managed to become exempted from this law, after citing petitions from villagers of the benefits to them of the monasteries retaining their land. (from Bertelsen, 1996)

I would like to go to Leh and tell all of the Ladakhi person about the work of Bakulu Rinpoche. When Bakulu was like a minister of Ladakh he talk with another people in another place, maybe Jammu and Kashmir about tax, before we have tax for Ladakh.

Before,
we have to do the duty for the minister when they come for duty, you know. My father he has to carry also.
But Bakulu talked and so they stopped this.

During Colonial times, Ladakh was part of Jammu and Kashmir state which exacted a sizable tax at the village level. While Grist, (1994) states that the tax system under the Dogra regime was similar to that which applied under the previous Kings, Moorcroft, a British visitor to Ladakh in 1822, foreseeing the likelihood of the Dogra invasion, referred to the prospect as 'the oppressive weight of Sikh extraction and insolence' (in Rizvi, 1983: 60), and clearly the account of Apile Thinley would suggest agreement with this.

Many people they send like from Jammu and Kashmir, they send some people for like tax and beat on the door with a stick and take the tax. When the people come to take tax, we have to do good for them, we have to give good food, chicken and then they come and take even the trees and take the goats.
Like that, and then they take back to Jammu.

Bakulu he stopped this, so this is very fine. I will go to the stage and talk in the speaker to the whole people.

And when they send some people here, they always beat people in the village. They call the people,
and they always beat,
they go to the head of the village like the Goba
and they always beat him.
We have to give them all the good things to eat.

Apile Thinley refers to what Grist (1994) refers to as the 'begar' system' of obligatory labour.

My father,
my father and the others
they have to carry the person and the wife, son, dog, they have to always carry from Saspool to Khalste, like this.
There is six of them, four to carry and two at the back resting: Some people they carry a whip to beat them as they carry, like a donkey.

When I see them going,
I feel like to die myself when I see them,
and they beat the people like a donkey,
and when they come back,
they are all red from the blood on their shoulders.

At that time people have no time to sleep either – the boys they have to wake up and go for duty like this, and the girls too, they have to wake up at 12 o'clock in the night and make wool for cloth, because we have to give everything else to them.

Rantok is the name for the traditional water powered grinding mill.

Now they use machine. For flour they also use machine, before they use Rantok.

Now people sell everything, sheep, goats, anything, they sell, sell, people are always selling, and when they grow the field they also use machine. This is the work girls can do, there is no more work for girls, they are selling sheep and goats and cows.

In my time there was school, but small one, six, seven, eight pupils. They used to come from three four villages, and they have no girl students.

Now they have a Higher Secondary School,
it is a scene like going to war,
like hero,
people all going together,
like going to war.

She is using the twelve year Tibetan astrological cycle to calculate her age- 'running nine times', meaning that eight cycles have past.

I am old now,
I am running nine times,
I am very old,
I see lots of things.

There is no more to eat,
so little food
So we must go for gilly duty

I see many things in my life,

and we have also to go for the gilly duty.
My friend says
lets go to do gilly duty from Hemis to saspool.
But they don't give us rest,
always use us for work.

Stanzin explains that 'gilly' is the local word for tyres – gilly duty therefore referring to the carrying of people in a sedan chair – as the people became human tyres. He too expressed surprise that women would do this work, but confirmed that this is what she said. While this work was at time obligatory, it was nominally paid for, meaning that it was an option to choose to do when, as in her case, there was little food.

At that time, we hate them the Jammu Kashmir people,
they always beat,
always bear the Goba.
When we have food, we hide it inside the field,
We hide it underground
so they beat the Goba to find where is the food,
so Goba if he is beaten hard,
he will go and find the chickens and food in the field.

In that time we are too poor,
so Bakulu Rinpoche
he brings some monks
and they bring some spirits,
and they make Stupa and make a wish that something will be good, that Ladakh will change soon, that Ladakh will be many things, lots of things will come to Ladakh, like for other parts of India.
Bakulu saw these things, he saw that it will change so that all become same level, poor people will become rich.

Before, the poor person, they don't have enough food
so they take some seeds from rich person,
and after that they grow them and have to give back and add a little bit extra too, and they have one cup less,
So because rich people are lending these things, many things the rich people are lending us, so because of that any time the rich person calls the poor person, they have to go, they have to go to work free.

Stanzin uses the term level to mean more than just economic equality, but equality of social status.

But Bakulu is like a minister, so they make one society government, they say that rich people must lend some seeds to poor person,
the rich they must lend and the rich they can't use the poor person. After Bakulu,
when he wished it,
everyone become level,
so like that.

Bakulu, one time, the Kargil people tried to kill Bakulu, but that time Bakulu had some power also, most people say that on his back there is drawing of seeds, so he has power.

Bakulu he does so many things for Ladakh, and Ladakh becomes like his son,
so Ladakhi people must pray for him,
he put clothes on Ladakh,
he goes to other place in India and talk and fight in parliament.

So now
it is very free,
very good,
there is very much freedom in this time, everyone free.
In the night there is sun also, because it is a good thing.
If you can know it, now is like heaven
You must understand your life now,
before it was not like this.

POSTSCRIPT

This interview, videoed by Stanzin, is done differently to most. Stanzin talks with her and I simply sit. Occasionally, I ask him to ask her something, but mostly it is between the two of them, an old lady telling her great grandson about the past. It is his conversation, not mine, and afterwards he translates, explains to me what they were talking about.
I have chosen to put this as a monologue not only for effect, but also as it reflected well the style of the conversation – that was in response to the open question of how her life has changed over the years. I have rephrased it back into the first person, but kept the wording and expressions given by Stanzin.

An old lady, her age marked 'running nine times around' - speaks of the past – a time, perhaps when she was young, only a girl perhaps, it is not clear exactly when, we do not know this for sure.

Here there are only stories of a time 'before', ***'perhaps she is seeing this again as she talks'***, Stanzin, her great grandson says.

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From Apile Thinley we get a time before and a time now. A time before - of hunger, of not having, of beatings, and a time now of sunlight. Between before and now stands Bakulu Rinpoche, the post independence political leader of Ladakh and monk, who has brought spirits to help bring development, and seen in a vision, the a new and better life for Ladakhi People.

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One might say that, she offers evidence of the the truth of the words of Nawang Tsering, a local academic when he says

> *If one asks the older generation to comment on whether they were happier in the 1940 or 1990 they would unhesitating say that as far as the comfort of their lives in concerned there is no comparison, in that respect they are better off now. Don't the people find themselves masters of their own patch of land and don't they find their harvest sweeter, as nobody now dares to lay a hand on them?*
>
> *(Tsering, 1994: 46, in Bertelsen, 1996: 10)*

But of course there are many readings of this narrative of change over the last ninety years in Ladakh, not only this one – narratives of development (life is so much easier now), of politics (they tried to kill Bakulu), of Buddhism (he brought the spirits to Ladakh), but perhaps principally, if we take her first statement as being most important, of ambiguity (why are people so bad now).

There is an ease with which, when one talks about the past, we are seduced into writing simple certainties. We end up writing,

> ***In 1834 the Dogras invaded Ladakh, thereby ending an unbroken 900 years of independent rule – the time of the kings.***

But this is not my intention - I wish to understand the past both as a complex site of multiple readings, but more importantly, something that, mediated through narrative, becomes implicated in the present – as something that informs our understandings of the present.

We can see this clearly in Apile Thinley narrative, switching as she does between the time of before and the time of now, through iterations of co-construction, where the hunger and hardship of before are drawn upon to understand the present - the now of this new modern world of Ladakh, with its armies of students and its sunlight even in the night time - if only we are able to see it.

But more, this is not a simply exercise in understanding – it is an exercise in production. It is not only to see the ways that Ladakhi past enables the hegemony of educational and developmental discourses, it is to show how, in the wake of colonialism, we can act other than in simple response to experiences of suffering that were not essential of the past, but actively constructed by it.

Punter, taking the work of Derrida (1994) as indicative that we live increasingly in a world of ghosts, spirits, phantoms and spirits, suggests that this,

> ***is to put into question a whole series of assumptions about time which have at all points to with the 'posts' (...) formulations of the 'after', of what comes after; at the same time, however, they necessarily conjure up, make uncannily to appear before us, the very phenomenon they have, in a different sense surpassed, they prolong the life of their predecessors – unnaturally some might says – giving them the status of spirit haunting the apparently purged landscape of the contemporary.***
>
> ***(Punter, 2000: 62)***

The spirits of the colonialism haunt the understandings of Apile Thinley – how might they do otherwise? And, perhaps this is what Foucault was striving for – a way to understand the historically present.

But although metaphors of ghosts and haunting implicate the past, remind of, in this case, of the colonial past that constructs educational and developmental discourses, I understand them, not

only as a call to embrace the past, but to overcome it – a search for how might we 'become' post - how might the post-colonial become?

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But here, the implicit linearity of the process of 'haunting' limits, it seems to me, the work that the past suggests. If however we take, as Buddhism does, life as a cycle of life, death and rebirth, the past, as for the future, is a place of our own existence.

This recycling, where we are destined to play out our samsaric existence, suggests not that the time of colonialism has passed, as the world becomes inevitably other than what it was, nor even that it haunts the present, but that, unless we find a way to overcome this karma, we are destined to simply play out our different colonial realities in the present.

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Perhaps this seems overly pessimistic – where neo-colonialism is not the danger, but the likelihood, but perhaps too, it directs our gaze to the danger of mistake of thinking that simply because the present looks different to the past we have overcome it. The task becomes a different one - not how might we overcome the (colonial) past, but how might we overcome, in the present, the colonial present that is its legacy.

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CHAPTER II

EXPERIENCING THE PRESENT TRACING THE PAST

This chapter mediates between theory and experience, seeking to 'translate' theoretical ideas into the experiential world of data collection, analysis and representation. For research that seeks to look at indigenous knowledge, the question of epistemology, of what might count as legitimate knowledge is central.
The chapter outlines a way of 'experiencing data' with an ambition of being sensitive to indigenous ways of knowing.

Chapter Outline

IIA Research ambitions
Research questions (short form)
Research question (long form)

IIB Alighting upon truth
Validity after poststructuralism
Criteria for good research
The ethics of knowing
The ethics of not kowing
Living theory

IIC Locating the research
Searching for ripples
Looking for resistances
Tracing the past
Moments of data collection
Absences

IID Experiencing data
Participation/transformation
Interviewing/listening
Visual methodologies

'(Ethnography's) warrant and worth lie in it's power to describe in depth and detail the dynamics of intersubjective life under a variety of cultural conditions in the hope that one may thereby be led to an understanding of how those ***rare moments of erasure and effacement occur when self and other are constituted in mutuality and acceptance rather than violence and contempt'***

(Jackson, 1998: 208, my emphasis)

Here Come The Anthros

And the Anthros still keep coming
like death and taxes to our land
to study their feathered freaks
with funded money into their hand.
Like a Sunday at the zoo
The camera could go in
taking notes and tape recordings
of all the animals at play
Here come the anthros
Better Hide your past away
Here come the anthros on another holiday.

(Fred Westerman, (a member of the Dakota nation),
1985:237, quoted in Denzin, 1997: 214),

IIA RESEARCH AMBITIONS

We have two young dogs – Hungarian Pulis – sheepdogs with dreadlocks, one black, one white - highly strung, always alert. One day, amazed at seeing an old man coming out of a shop where his Puli had been waiting patiently outside for him, I asked him how he had trained her to do that – 'I didn't' he said. 'we have just come to understand each other over the years'.

And so it is with me and my research questions. I resisted for a long time, felt that my open ended approach, my 'circling around' was not compatible with research questions that felt as if they closed down, inevitable looked too narrowly, directed gaze too tightly.

I now understand that it was not the idea of a research question per se that troubled me (though I shortly go on to reconfigure this slightly), but the ordering – the idea that research questions might precede theory, direct theory. Instead, I have come to see the directionality, if anything, as opposite – that it is only from the perspective of theoretical consideration that it is possible to construct research questions, implicated as they inevitably are with theoretical implications. To put it differently, if research questions precede theory, they already prefigure the ways of seeing that will be possible. Research deserves more theoretical consideration and if it is to offer new ways of seeing, this is necessary.

It should be clear I hope that the fact that I have so far only offered one initial (and open) conceptualisation of my research problem – ***'the impact of western education on indigenous knowledge in Ladakh'*** is a deliberate act. Waiting as it was for the right time, fully clothed with theory to expand into specific research questions.

That time is now here, and yet I still resist. The framing of this research that I have outlined – as one that emphasises on the one hand the experience of the research encounter, and on the other, the decolonising possibility of research praxis, suggests that it is not sufficient for the research to be directed by a set of research questions alone – a praxis is not simply a finding out, it seeks to be an enaction in the world – it has greater ambitions.

What I want this thesis to be

I want this thesis to be
Uplifting, hopeful, human, understanding, funny
Truthful, troubling, transgressive, enjoyable
Sad
Offer new shoots of possibility
I wish to explore, to overcome my own western scientific background
to encounter new experiences
to understand what I was doing all those years, and what impact I might have been having
to find news ways of engaging in education in the 'Global South' that is not so colonial, to find new sources of hope and directions for encountering
to critique models of educational development that are based on western thought
to offer respect
to engage in my own ignorance, to be a learner
to experience the mountain air, to be uncertain
to slow down to the movement of the earth
to acknowledge
to transgress the borders around schools
to see what it would mean to do research differently

Research questions (short form)

1. What are the impacts of western education on IK practices in Ladakh?

2. What are the dynamics of hegemony of and resistance to western education, and how are these articulated?

3. What forms of research knowledge production might offer counter hegemonic strategies able to offer more appropriate educational experiences for Ladakhi students?

4. How might a research encounter be a decolonising transformative space?

Research questions (long form)

1. What are the impacts of western education on IK practices in Ladakh?

I am not sure about that word 'impact' – altogether too positivist somehow, too causal – and yet I wish to seek out the contact zone between indigenous knowledge and western education, even though I need to trouble these categories. I do not wish to silence the indigenous by collapsing it into hybridity.

2. What are the dynamics of hegemony of and resistance to western education, and how are these articulated?

This can perhaps be traced back to a statement that my supervisor once said, that mulled over in my mind for many months, before its truth unfurled - 'on the cusp between Gramsci and Foucault'. Because while I seek to retain a Gramscian interest in hegemony and its articulation, there is a more poststructuralist turn that seeks to understand how, within the dynamics of the unfolding present, powerful groups articulate to reinscribe their position.

3. What forms of research knowledge production might offer counter hegemonic strategies able to offer more appropriate educational experiences for Ladakhi students?

I am in the process of knowledge production and there are many ways to construct this research knowledge – different methodologies, different theoretical frameworks, different data collection methods, different forms of analysis (and perhaps more fundamentally, different experiences) - each leading inevitably to different knowledge being produced. The question becomes, not simply what the different understandings of this topic might be, but what understandings, what knowledge productions, might be counter hegemonic in the context of Ladakh.

4. How might a research encounter be a decolonising transformative space?

This is a research question that I only belatedly came to realise that was something I was searching for answers to - how the research encounter (a meeting between myself and people and situations that I seek to understand) can be a transformative, can move in the direction of decolonisation.

IIB ALIGHTING UPON TRUTH

Validity after poststructuralism

What do we do with validity and the legitimation question after we've met critical poststructuralism?
(quoted in Denzin, 1997: 9, paraphrasing Lather, 1993)

The question of validity in research, though of course relevant for all research, is perhaps particularly so for a PhD thesis, that has, as one of its ambitions, to pass the scutiny of two examiners, representatives of the academic community.

There are different labels I could use here for my work – critical ethnography, postmodern ethnography - I have offered critical narrative in the previous chapter. Whatever the label, the question of what we do with validity after critical poststructuralism is one that needs to be addressed. How do we make judgements when all truths are partial, when data is constructed, when research knowledge too is embodied, when we can no longer point to structures and say - 'see here, look what I unearthed?', 'See here the truth that I found?'

And yet, in a sense this is a false concern – one that I might argue simply serves to limit the possibilities of research. Of course we should exercise caution that uncertainty does not become an end in itself, whereby

that way our ignorance is made into the greatest discovery of all
(Chögyam Trungpa, 1991: 7)

Santos would call this danger celebratory postmodernism (Santos, 2005) and I have much sympathy with those that would critique the idea that we might see validity only in terms of the truthfulness of representation of the uniqueness of a particular situated moment. Multiple narratives of complexity or fragmented, layered accounts (Ronai, 1995) can be put to critical purpose - there are many ways to be different – not all of them emancipatory.

Santos, as we saw in the last chapter, has a different purpose for his oppositional postmodernism, using uncertainty as a tool for imagining new worlds. If earlier I sought to claim a space for the human and the narrative within critical theory, perhaps here, I seek to do the opposite, claim a space for the critical within postmodern narratives. It is in the critical ambition of this research endeavour that spaces for judgement can be found.

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what we do with validity after poststructuralism?

Denzin (1997), drawing upon Lather's work, offers one answer in a survey of different ways of understanding authority and legitimation within a poststructuralist framework. Three of these possible directions resonate with my own theoretical approach, as outlined in the previous chapter - political, paralogical, rhizomatic – and offer directions for how we might judge the work.

Political

In the political, where there is an emphasis on understanding how power and ideology operate through systems of discourse, a good text (...) is one that exposes how race class, gender work their ways into the concrete lives interacting individuals.

(ibid: 10)

'the essence of the novel, in my analysis, is its capacity to put different orders of experience into dialogue with each other. Similarly, when we analyse an interview, we can track this dialogue between different orders of individual experience or the dialogue of the individual with the social world of others. People tell us about their awareness of their own multiplicity, different self experiences, often with different usages of language.'

(Josselson, 1995: 42)

Paralogical

Paralogical legitimation foregrounds dissensus, heterogeneity, and multiple discourses that destabilize the researchers' position as the master of truth and knowledge.

(ibd:14)

Rhizomatic

Rhizomatic legitimation works with ideas of multivoiced texts, where 'multiple voices speak and articulate their definitions of the situation'

(ibid:14)

This offers us a useful way of conceptualising validity. But we must remember that these are typologies, not discrete categories of research and that any given project has multiple overlapping ambitions. To use this language, I see traces of the political, paralogical and rhizomatic, in this research.

A desire to trace the articulations of the hegemony of western education certainly would be political; a poststructuralist concern for tracing the reinscriptions of the power within the present, mixed with more postmodern concerns with destabilising truth, might be thought of as paralogical; for sure, my research is filled with uncertainties, paradoxes, tensions that would not wish any single voice to be representative.

Criteria for good research

Lather's typology is useful in offering us a way to think about criteria for judging research, but whilst I applaud debate around research validity and legitimacy, I also consider the attempt to define alternative criteria per se, as somewhat misplaced. If we take Jackson's point that life is always more than the theoretical understandings that purportedly give rise to its becoming, then ethnography too gives rise to more than that which could be judged. The research is always more productive than it appears.

This is important, because, just as I would wish to capture those parts of human experience that are excessive, so too, I would also wish to express those parts of the thesis that move beyond the research questions.

I have called these excesses my 'research criteria', and list them here. They should be understood in the context of the earlier discussion of validity – as an aspiration of what I would like the research to be, and so equally as something that I would like the research to be considered against.

Compassionate. In a rhizomic configuration there are no Others; in Buddhism the response to the suffering of the world is compassion, precisely because there is no other. The possibility remains for a criticality that is compassionate rather than simply insightful.

Poiesis. Making anew. Of course, what else can I suggest for a PhD that must be 'a unique contribution to knowledge', but creation of newness is broader - new knowledge, new ideas, new epistemologies, new understandings, new aesthetics, new worlds envisioned, new directions outlined.

Rhizomic. I wish the research to associate – different ideas, different experiences. Crucially, it should make links between the moment of experience and broader themes of resistance, power and inequality. It should connect between moments of fieldwork experience and theoretical abstractions.

Illuminatory/revelatory. These phrases have similar, overlapping meaning – the agency of the person who illuminates, and the passivity of the person who is revealed to. Both emphasise the bringing to attention something that, if not explicitly hidden has been left untouched – such as the indigenous knowledge perspective that this thesis explores.

Resonance. The point is not that my research should be understood by others in ways that I personally recognise, but rather that it can offer resonances for those engaging with it. Although resonance is often used in a narrowly emotive sense (I feel the pain, excitement of the person that I am reading about), I mean this in a broader sense of the evocation within oneself of something, be it cognitive, theoretical or experiential. The aesthetics of the work is relevant here - as part of the development of a space where resonance can take place.

Transformative. Although most research attempts to be useful in some way, much pits the social good that can come from research against a perception of the intrinsically exploitative nature of research. I rather see the task as constructing research in ways that can be, at least in part a positive experience for participants - be that simply of interest or of transformation.

Transferability. Transferability dissociated from a generalisability achieved through a simplification to core similarities. Rather, in retaining the contingent and contextual, transferability is achieved both through resonance, and through an approach to how such phenomena might be understood.

Affirmation (of indigenous knowledge). As one part of a commitment to resist its loss. The placing of Ladakh, and Ladakhis centre-stage, not as (as is often the case) simply an example of a theoretical concept – not how globalisation or indigenous methodology might be understood in the context of Ladakh, but rather the other way around (the view from the other side) – how theoretical concepts such as globalisation or indigenous methodology might be utilised to better understand and transform the context of Ladakh.

The ethics of knowing

Cathy Riessman (2005) relates a story she came across when researching infertility in South India. A few years previously the state government had carried out a programme of vasectomies on village men – offering a radio and a few rupees in exchange for the operation. Many of the men had only found out what had really happened to them when they had gone along with their wives to the infertility clinic she was studying, when they had been unsuccessful in trying for a baby.

So when Riessman turned up, with her own research consent form, memories of that past trauma – when a similar consent form had been used surfaced. She didn't use her form.

Consent forms and other technologies of regulation are common, are seen as a protection for the participant. And yet, as this story shows, they have different association, cut both ways – offering protection for the researcher – 'its OK, I got their consent, I have their permission to do this (x, y, z)' as much as the researched. My own solution was not to use consent forms, as this would have seemed both unnecessary and indeed counter productive to the trust that I wished to engender. Instead I placed great emphasis on making sure that people understood what I was doing. Although I did not offer anonymity, as this is often not possible is small region like Ladakh, I have anonymised data where I can.

In conducting this research, I have followed Departmental and University of Bristol guidelines for research as well as adopting the British Educational Research Association ethical guidelines (BERA, 2004). But, in placing emphasis on the importance of ethics in research, an issue particularly relevant in a cross cultural context, I have found also looked to other sources to think about the ethics of the research process.

Let us start with Zygmund Bauman. In his book, 'Postmodern Ethics' (Bauman, 1993) offers a critique of traditional view of ethics as based on a set of rules and propositions. Skiotis characterises Bauman's view of ethics in the following way,

> *It also enables the justification of its imperial ambitions as being that of imposing a universally valid set of moral standards. A major part of Bauman's thesis in PME is the unmasking of this use of state power as being in the interests of certain classes and groups within society.*
>
> *(Skiotis, 2005: 4)*

No doubt the men in South India would agree. In calling for a more relational 'postmodern' ethics, Bauman, is echoing the work of Levinas, (2000) whose work as a 'philosopher of the other', has been characterised as an attempt to construct an epistemology based not on truth, but in ethics (Joldersma, 2003).

Levinas is interested in the 'stranger within our gates' as a basis to consider ethicality, precisely because the Other has no power – there is no basis of self interested reciprocality here,

> ***When we see the face of the other we see vulnerability, it cannot command, but at the same time it does command. It tells you to 'do me no harm, do me good. The stranger within you gates, precisely because it has no legal or political power, offers an ethical command.***
>
> ***(Ioldersma, 2003)***

This thread of an ethical relation to the other is also something that runs deeply through Buddhism and in particularly through Mahayana (Tibetan) Buddhism. While the Hinayana (small wheel) Buddhism of South Asia takes it root texts from the early teachings of Buddha, the later teachings of Buddha that were taken up in Tibet emphasised the liberation of all sentient beings, not just a personal salvation.

> ***In projecting one's own liberation from samsara, one ignores the piteous cries of suffering beings throughout time and space. In realizing that samsara are nirvana are conceptualizations, one realizes that there is nothing to reject and nothing to attain. This realization leaves one aspiring to be nowhere other than where one is, among suffering being, and this freedom opens a floodgate of compassion.***
>
> ***(Ray, 2002: 394)***

These different ethical trajectories converge when considering the question of what it would mean to do research ethically in Ladakh. The Buddhist concepts of 'right mind' and 'right action' emphasise ethics as a right way of relating to the other – not based on a set of principles. In a similar stance, and within a western frame Bond (Bond, 2004) has called for an 'ethical mindfulness' to replace the idea of an initial ethical 'consent' – thereby locating ethics within an ongoing consideration of research relationships.

Understanding ethics as an ongoing relational issue draws attention to its contextual dimension. I was therefore keen to know what ethical research might mean in a Ladakhi context. Here is Nawang Tsering Shakspo, a local academic on the subject during a personal conversation,

> ***it is about treating fairly, respecting people, being open and transparent, choosing to do good, to show people in good light.***

At first sight, this would appear to give free rein – free of the rules and regulations of ethical committees in the west. In fact, I found the opposite to be the case. The call to be on their side, to not judge harshly, not to do, what would seem to flow so naturally within an academic genre - to simply critique, to always present the positive, felt, initially at least to bind too tightly.

And yet, as ethical consideration should be, this has been immensely productive, in that it as called my attention to developing compassionate understandings of situations. Although I do not always share the view of respondents, I have sought to offer analyses that they would be happy to read.

My final point about the ethics of knowing is that I have chosen to include as data, the thoughts of people whom I talked with outside the confines of a formal data collection episode – such as people I met on the bus or in cafés. Ultimately, I have included

these on ethical grounds – the question 'is it ethical to do so?', being rather less convincing for me than the question, 'is it ethical not to do so?' – to knowingly silence these myriad views. That said, they have been included only when I was able to bring them in with compassion, rather than to criticise, and where it has been easily possible to anonymise them.

Indeed, one of the reasons that I have chosen a narrative genre is that for a small place like Ladakh where true anonymity is a rare thing, it allows, as stories always have been used for, to put real voices into the mouths of representative heads.

The ethics of not knowing

She just looked like in the film - face and nose surrounded by the simple red scarf, headdress of brilliant gold crowning her. This was an audience with royalty, with a spirit, with power, with other.

A man prostrate before her/incense/the sizzle as the hot knife she holds is suddenly placed on her tongue/the thoo of her breath over his arms, neck, arms again, face / the sizzle of the knife/ the 'thoo' of her breath again/his head pushed low, lower over the coals /incense / sadness pain overwhelms /suffering is wrenched from him, from us / the dorji hits his neck, back /chanting / tears fall over the charcoal

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Ayu Lhamo, The Lhamo of Ayu, the oracle of Ayu, the lowest part of Saboo village. Ayu Lhamo is famous. I have watched a film about her, indeed, seen her pictures in the Ladakhi coffee table books. I have gone to visit her, unsure. I do not know here she might fit into my indigenous knowledge framework. Each day, she invites a spirit to possess her, receives people, listens to them, offers cures, directions, advice, gives at the end, protective blessed necklaces.

So I go unsure of why, only that I should – that I might not know how to fit what she does into my framework of knowledge many Saboopas do. I plan to ask afterwards if I can talk with her, but do not. I am shaken, tired from this experience. I am sitting undecided, imagining the conversation that would follow – ***'so how do you find being possessed has changed over the years?'*** It feels, well, disrespectful, absurd even, more - feels Eurocentric, would seem to have missed the point. Her knowledge has been performed – she has offered what she wishes to offer. I have no desire to reconfigure this as anything other than sacred.

I do not wish to analyse this experience – have no desire to offer thoughts on the possible role of oracles in Ladakhi society, even on the effect of western schooling on them. Perhaps if I were a Buddhist scholar or lama, I might feel it possible – but these things are unknown to me, sufficiently unknown, not to intrude.

And yet, I choose, in the end, to write, because there are other things that are learnt. I write this to draw a line that marks the edge of a space that I know is present, even as it remains

unknown. The outline of the negative space in the thesis. I know this space is important - this world of spirits and gods. I am talking with a friend of a friend. He is explaining how his father had to block off the main entrance to their house, and build another, because the spirits were tormenting him. There is an enchanted world that runs through the material.

———

This boundary is important – I am happy with my unknowing. It feels that unknowing is the only ethical position here, a relief in finding that which (can remain) non understandable (for the restless western mind). Remember, it says – it is not only that there are things that must remain unknown, there are also ways of knowing that exist the other side of the line.

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Living theory

I seek to conduct research coherently, holistically. There is no linearity of progress, as Trinh. T. Minh-ha (1989) reminded us in the previous chapter, no breaking through - only a transformative 'coming to know' that is at once both theoretical and experiential.

I have come to understand epistemology in this broad sense therefore – as the ways that I have chosen to 'come to know' my research topic. I am not sure why it seems radical to suggest that research epistemology should be a process of 'living theory' – we are united in one body after all - my thoughts, and my actions. But if theory is to be considered meaningful in the research, if it is to be recognised in its productive capacity, it needs to be taken out of the implicit place it has within our actions - it is not enough to place theory as something that can be put on a shelf until arrival back 'home', with some transcripts to look at.

'How many are the anthropologists for whom the aura of "empirical research" has served to legitimate as fieldwork varying periods spent on getting over culture shock, fighting loneliness and some humiliating tropical diseases, coping with the claims of the local expatriate community, and learning more about corruption in the local bureaucracy – all this before finally getting together some meagre, second hand information?'
(Fabian, 2002: 94)

If I am therefore to experience with theory, I must know what it means to see through Gramscian eyes, to encounter with the full knowledge of the colonial inscriptions that I carry, to interview with a thought to the new worlds that can be envisioned, to write knowing that these words are only necessary illusions.

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Fieldnote:
I retreat/expand into those things that I consciously think of as thematic, important, theoretical even – things inspired by readings, as if they are more worthy, have greater currency than everyday thoughts.

Ethnographic fieldwork is a 24-hour a day experience. There is no 'home' that you go to at the end of the day of collecting data - it is a life, in all its glories. I want to say, it is life, nothing more – seek to de-privilege it as a way of knowing – but of course, it is simply a different life – a particular way of living – particular way of engaging in knowing a world, a world that is, at least initially, and to some degree always, a unfamiliar place. In this unfamiliar place, in the 'real-researchik' of fieldwork, the overriding feeling was rather of continually being faced with decisions, decisions, decisions.

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Understanding research as engaged in Hermeneutic circles, iterative process, dialectics of theory and experience, as 'living theory' - however we choose to describe it - provides opportunities for research to be understood (and so crucially proceed) as a process of continual growth and reflexivity.

Left at that, however, suggests that this transformative process is a natural one, brought about by the mere engagement between what was first thought and what is newly understood.

Who to talk to? what to say? Where to eat lunch? Which village to walk to? who to trust? How to remember what they said? How to spend hours writing? What to do at the weekend? How to simply spend time without collecting data? How do I see with Gramsci? How to get to the phone, how to sleep? Where is the doctor? How to say I don't want to drink anymore tea? How to get from here to there? How to get to the end of the queue? Where to look? How to look? How do I understand what is happening here? How do I understand the world anew? How do I get angry here? How to I deal with this passive researcher role? How do I know what is polite?

If only someone had explained, not what the options were, not what choice there were to be made, not even the processes whereby these choices could be put into some sort of logical order, but rather the more fundamental question -

How were such decisions could be made? – How do we choose?

A life, for a few months, with decisions to be made, strange waters to be navigated. An unfamiliar world that needs not only to be lived, survived in an ad hoc way, but one that makes claims to offer more – be a uniquely productive way of knowing the world.

Of course, having partly gone through the process, I have a sense of how deeply personal such choices are, and so maybe difficult to express. Yet, within the unfolding decision making process of the research encounter, research ambitions need to be implemented and theories need to be translated into ways of experiencing.

It is therefore only by looking back to theory that it is possible to move forward into methodology coherently. In the next two sections I therefore outline the implications from the discussions so far onto a) firstly where I chose to locate the research (what the method of sampling was) and b) how I chose to experience data collection (what methods of data collection were used).

IIC LOCATING THE RESEARCH

The Critical narrative rhizome outlines a way of understanding the research problem that suggested three ways of engaging with fieldwork experiences.

Searching for ripples

Perhaps the most important implication to emerge from the theoretical framework was the importance of looking outside the educational system altogether. To use the analogy I introduced earlier, to search for the ripples from the school system as they passed through the village indigenous knowledge communities. This suggested the following:

Be based in villages, but look from the village to the school, not the other way around

Explore the indigenous knowledge practices in villages, and how these communities see schooling

To talk with different indigenous knowledge practitioners, to see how they have been differently impacted upon

To look gently and sensitively - impacts can be various and subtle

Looking for resistances

The theoretical framework that I have outlined, constructs western education as hegemonic, but in so doing, equally creates spaces for resistance. This suggests a focus upon the ways that people are attempting to resist western education, through attempts to localise the education system, through the development of alternative schools, through sending children to study indigenous knowledge. I therefore chose to:

Research the activities of SECMOL a local NGO, and the only one to be involved in school reform. They have written textbooks, and working with the government education to influence policy and practice

Looking at the ways that the non-governmental schools were attempting to offer a different educational experience

Looking at non institutionalised educational practices - apprenticeship practices

Tracing the past

The theoretical rhizome that I use emphasises the importance of the past both constitutive of current situations (Foucault, 1980, 2002), and as a potential source of counter hegemonic thought (Gramsci, 1985). These readings understand the past as something that leaves traces on the present – in past experiences (of colonialism, of hunger, of educational disadvantage), and in the social narratives that are created. Understood as traces, they are both visible to be read, but obscured, needing to be interpreted. Taken together with a postmodern reading that suggests that rather than 'history', that the past is present as a series of historical narratives, suggests:

That I talk with old people, about their experiences

That interviews emphasise change, history, reflexive narratives

To record the dominant narratives of the past.

Moments of data collection

The data itself was collected during two trips to Ladakh. The first trip between Nov-Dec 2004, and a second longer trip between June – August 2005. As the start of the second year of study began, I felt a pull (for indeed it was this, rather than a rationalised decision) to make an initial trip to Ladakh. The primary aim was to make contact with organisations that I might work collaboratively with – the NGOs 'SECMOL' (involved in educational reform) and 'ISEC', (a UK based NGO interested in village reform), and the only Academy in Ladakh – the Jammu and Kashmir Academy for Arts Language and Culture.

But the trip was probably as much as reflection of an epistemology that I needed to sense the place before I proceeded any further. I had got to a point where any more methodological or theoretical work was unable to proceed any further – it was high time for some experience.

'as so often happens, such first impressions, because they are first and perhaps as well because they are impressions rather than worked-up theories or pinned-down facts, set a frame of perception and understanding, a Jamesian hum of birds and implication that could not afterward be wholly discarded only critiqued, developed, filled out, moralized upon, and brought to bear on more exact experiences.'

(Geertz, 1995:13)

Although I had visited the UK office of ISEC, and came away with a list of contacts, I left largely encumbered by expectation of direction. No one would meet me, no expectations for what I was doing would present themselves and no institutional connections would lead me in - I tried to engage with the possibility rather than the anxiety of this.

I took an unstructured approach – talked generally to people in different NGOs, wrote notes in a diary, talked to guest house owners, chatted to people on the bus, dropped into schools, visited monasteries. The trip was successful - contacts were made, initial plans developed that would be followed up.

It was during this first trip that I met Nawang Tsering Shakspo – the head of the Academy. Nawang was an exemplary host, used to meeting visiting students and professors alike, and through Nawang, who lived in the village of Saboo, 8km outside the main town of central Ladakh, Leh, I ended up spending much of my

fieldwork in his village. Nawang's own research principally focused upon linguistics, but as head of the Academy was involved in supporting Ladakhi cultural heritage more generally – poets, writers, dancers, musicians. He was to become a great listener to share ideas with, a great teacher of all things Ladakhi, and a good friend.

Moments of data collection

I express it like this, to allude both to poststructural concerns with the reinscription of power, to a Buddhist understanding of the moment of existence that is now, and to situate the encounters geographically and temporally so as not to deny, as Fabian has warned us, the coevlaness of the encounter.

Fabian uses the term coeval (literally same-time) to refer to the need to locate ethnographic texts in the real time of the anthropological encounter.

In this, in placing the experience of the encounter as the unit of analysis, I follow the spirit, if not the methodology of participatory action research (PAR), drawing on the work of the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, and in particular on the concept of ***'vivencias'***. Vivencias are seen as fundamental episodes of experience, where,

> ***[T]hrough the actual experience or something, we intuitively apprehended its essence; we feel, ensuring and understand it as a reality, and would thereby place our own being in a wider, more fulfilling context***
>
> ***(Fals Borda, 1991: 4)***

The sites of the data collection that have been used in the research are shown on a map of Ladakh on the next page. They form relatively discrete blocks – bounded either geographically, thematically or experientially, as follows:

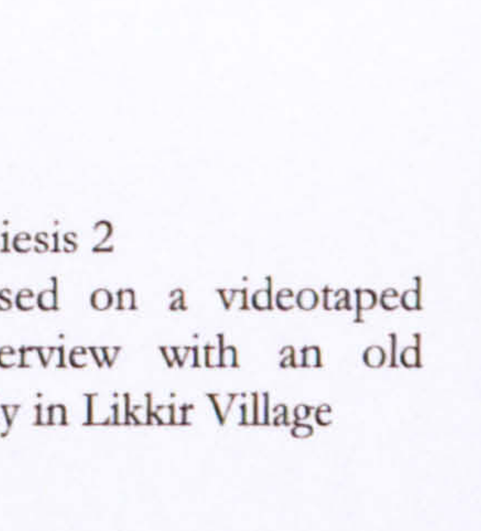
> ***A month in Saboo village talking to indigenous knowledge practitioners.***
>
> ***A week teaching maths in Saboo junior High school***
>
> ***A week in Likkir Village – making a movie***
>
> ***A ten day trek, transecting Ladakh***
>
> ***A week being an apprentice for a traditional sculptor***
>
> ***Visits to SECMOL campus and alternative schools across Ladakh***
>
> ***Interviews with government educational officials***

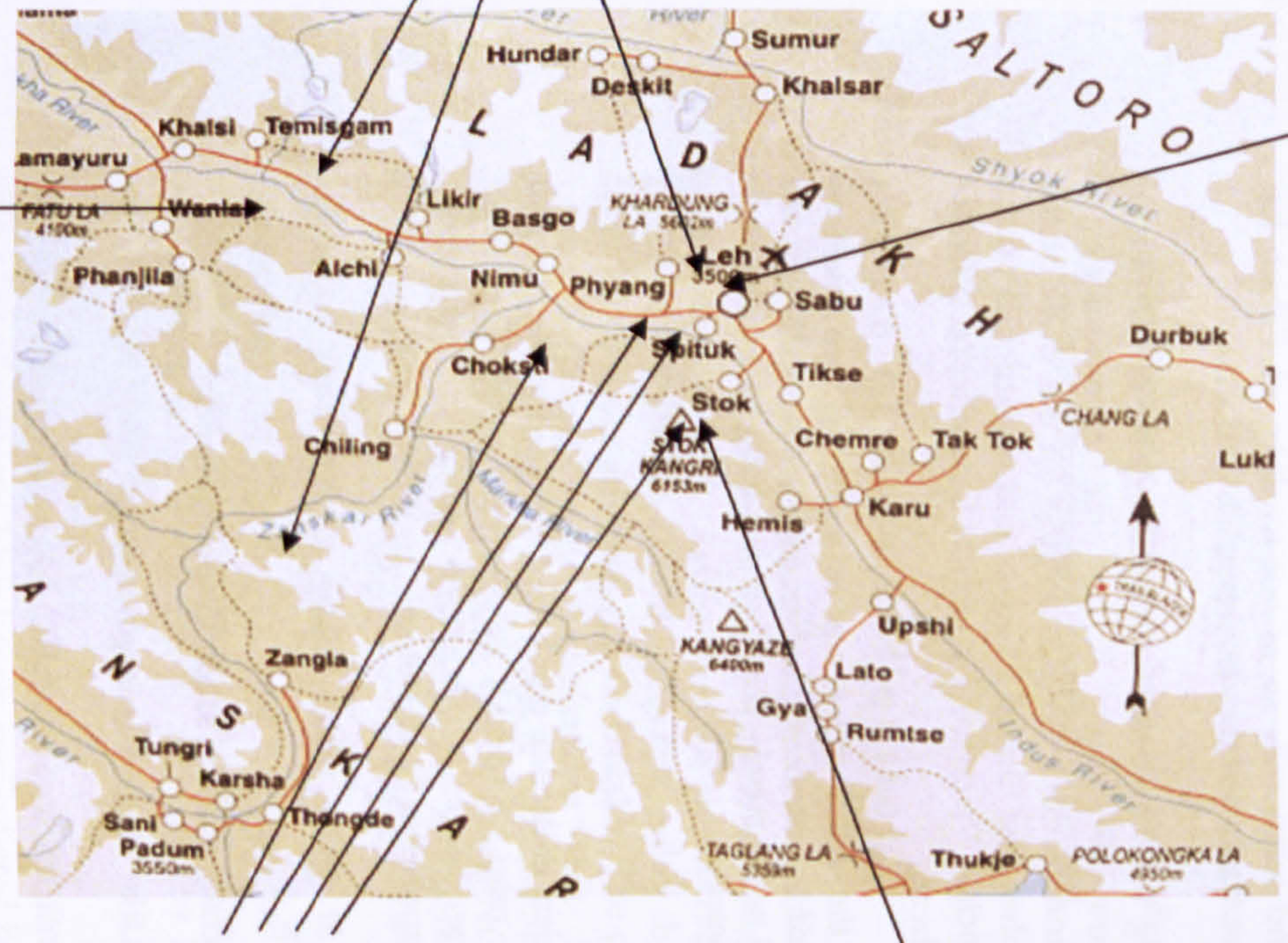
Poiesis 2
Based on a videotaped interview with an old lady in Likkir Village

Poiesis 3
Based on a month long stay in Saboo Village, a week long stay in Likkir Village, and a ten day walk across the western part of Ladakh. Data was principally interviews with indigenous knowledge practitioners.

Poiesis 4
Based on aweek of Teaching in Saboo Junior High school

Poiesis 1
Based in a day's data collections herding 'dzo' in the mountains above Saboo Village





Poiesis 5
Based on a week as a apprentice sculptor in Thikse Monastery

Poiesis 6
Based on literature of the history of Ladakh

Poiesis 7
Based on visits to a number of non-governmental schools, and interviews with both education department officials and NGOs working for educational reform.

Absences

It would seem only right and proper that, after drawing Santos (2004) work on the 'sociology of absences' to mention the absences in the experiences that I had, and so in the narratives that I have created. Perhaps most prominent of these is the dominant role of the Indian Army in Ladakhi life. As the expression I often heard in Ladakh goes,

Ladakh has two fathers - the army and tourism.

The geopolitical location of Ladakh between China and Pakistan, has seen wars on its soil with both since Indian Independence. The inevitable build up of Indian Army troops, and the expansion of the 'Ladakhi Scouts' as a local squadron physically suited to high altitude warfare means that the army plays a huge role – as a direct employer (I was told that most families would have one member in the army), as an ad hoc employer (many young men spend the winter portering supplies up the famous Siachen Glacier – at more than 5000m, said to be the highest active war zone in the world), and as a consumer (many villages grew cash crops because the army would buy them).

The army has not been my direct concern, and where I have seen its direct impact on the research topic, have mentioned this (e.g. when the army put up the minimum school qualification from class VII to class X, this had a direct impact on school 'dropout' at class VIII), but must acknowledge that, while as a 'pseudo-tourist', I am placed to understand the impact of tourism, to operate, at least partially, within the lines of power that this affords, I have no connection with army life.

Secondly I would draw attention to gender issues surrounding the account, which will always be present in any research. Though most commentators note the surprising equality between the sexes (Norberg Hodge, 2000, Rizvi, 1983), often discussing the polyandry that was prevalent here until early last century, this does not mean that sexes occupy the same roles, or that as a man, I would have equal access to male and female opinion. Although I sought female opinion as much as male, and discussed this issue with NGO workers, I am aware that the conversations I had with women tended to be more cautious. Sadly, my experiences might tentatively suggest that the status of women in Ladakhi society is becoming less respected, as Ladakh engages with dominant Indian cultural attitudes, and as economic changes that favour mobility have tended to remove economic man from village life, leaving women with more work and less economic power. This is a topic that would be well deserving of research, but do not feel that I have sufficient data to make further comment.

I make no claims that my reading of the situation in Ladakh is anything more than partial, and analyses by people able to make comments on the gendered or militarised nature of the processes that I discuss would be welcomed. As for now, all I can ask is that these limitations are not forgotten.

IID EXPERIENCING DATA

Participating/transformation

As long as anthropology presents its object primarily as seen, as long as ethnographic knowledge is conceived primarily as observation and /or representation (in terms of models, symbol systems, and so forth) it is likely to persist in denying coevalness to its Other.

(Fabian, 2002: 151-152)

I love the story of the shipment of rubber ducks on their way from Hong Kong to Washington that were liberated when the container ship they were on went down in the middle of the pacific in 1992. Doing what they do best – floating on water, these 29,000 rubber ducks set off on a new adventure – not around bath tubs across America, but across the wide oceans.

These rubber ducks sudden found themselves being studied by oceanographers – who used their serendipitous release to study oceanic flow – a great opportunity to get very detailed data.

The first land sightings were in Alaska a few months later, then along the coast up to the Bering straights, where they became stuck in the ice for a few years in the arctic. By 2000 they had made their way through to the Atlantic, and are still being tracked.

The rubber ducks learn nothing, leave no trace, nor are they transformed by their journey. But their very positionality reveals the flow of water – the flow of power that take them to one place, and not another.

I am a rubber duck – I flow – to Bhutan, to Ladakh, to the village of Saboo. I think I have chosen this, I wish to write stories of agency, of choice – here they are in this thesis. And yet, I am in Saboo, not Changtang. I might have wished to go to Changtang, but I wouldn't have got a permit, as this is a restricted area near to the Chinese border. There are flows here. I end up in Saboo village, because that is where the head of the local academy lives, and I wish to work with him on my thesis – I am carried here - there is power. I flow to Ladakh. I can travel there, it is in India, there is power here. Colonialism, English Language, visa agreements. In Ladakh I talk of Bhutan, I am made welcome – there is power here - the historical friendship between the two states, united in their peripheral and ambivalent relationship to Tibet.

I am a rubber duck. It is not only in how we are changed that we can learn something. We trace the flows of power even as we exist.

Our bodies flow – flow better if we let them. There is a letting go. This is very Buddhist. Let the moment take you; see where it takes you. Watch and learn something from where it takes you. This is also very Foucauldian - power produces – some realities come into existence, others do not.

So I choose to participate as best I can – to immerse myself in situations, let situations transform me, learn things from this transformation that I could not learn by simply asking.

———

Sometimes it is time not to flow, to swim in the other direction. After a month in Saboo, I was dissatisfied. I had great data – lots of interviews, experiences – and yet, I knew that I had been carried there, that the view I was getting was an elite view - intrinsically mediated through the contacts that brought me there. I swam away – to Likkir to a poorer village, to a poorer family, to a friend who I had met while walking. The view was very different from there.

———

And in the swimming away, I also learn that I am not only a rubber duck – certain moves are allowed me – I have certain power – the white man in this place – I can get to teach in the school for a week – because I can teach maths, and they need a maths teacher. Other moves are not. I do not get the interview with the MP. SECMOL, the NGO I hoped to work with politely disengages, when our agendas diverge.

———

Let yourself be carried away, let yourself be transformed by the land you travel through.

It was late, dark, when Surjay called me, 'look, the lights, over there'. I went with him to the window. Sure enough, what looked like a few hundred metres away, yellowish lights flickering going up and down. Appearing and disappearing. 'It's the spirits' he said. 'No its not – it must just some people, walking along the path'. 'No, there's no path there – just the river!'. I frowned, sleepily. 'we'll see in the morning', I said, taking a mental note of the direction of the lights and exactly where I was standing – just to be sure.

In the morning, I looked again. He was right of course, no path there – just a sheer rock face above the river. I was never quite sure after that. The cracks had appeared in my western scientific framework. There must be some explanation, I kept thinking – but, it is difficult to think one thing, when those around you think something else.

So, later, when I as told, 'don't walk down that path after dark, there are ghosts', it was easier just to not walk there, and when I was told that the dog that hung around the village was called 'gomchen', because a passing lama had recognised him as someone he knew in his previous life, it all sounded very believable.

———

As the months passed in Bhutan, I was aware of myself becoming more, what my previous western mind might have called superstitious - no doubt my Bhutanese friends would have said that I began to see things that I hadn't been able to see before. I say this not to instigate a debate on the possible truth of western or folk belief, but as an example of the ways that a focus upon the intersubjective in the social world, opens up the space for understanding our own self as a site of evidence, transformed as it

'Just why this idea, and that cultural description is fashioned knowledge, second hand, so bothers some people is not entirely clear to me. Perhaps it has something to do with the necessity, if one adopts it, of taking personal responsibility for the cogency of what one says or writes, because one has, after all, said or written that, rather than displacing that responsibility onto " reality", " nature", " the world" or some other vague and capacious reservoir of incontaminate truth.'
(Geertz, 1995: 62)

is through mimesis or some other mechanism to understand the Other.

And if this does not overcome the radical uncertainty of this knowledge, that is no more or less so than any other form of data – simply another possible way to understand. I do not claim that we can see the world as others see it – only that we can begin to do so – and in that changing, learn something of the other.

There is always some aspect of oneself, however well hidden that corresponds, albeit obliquely, to the beliefs and behaviours one sees in others. Methodologically then, one proceeds from the latent in self to the manifest in others and from the manifest in self to the latent in others in a demanding series of essays in recognition.

(Jackson, M. 1998, 15)

Recognition

It is perhaps an extreme example
One man, an anthropologist
Another man, a sometime head-hunter in a faraway place
The two in a conversation
The first man hears the words and takes them back to the academy,
He spends years translating them into civilised thought, circling around the dark shadow of truth at their heart
And he knows that he has missed the meaning
Maybe he writes in some academic journal about the problems of understanding the 'Other',
And maybe he is secretly relieved at his inability to do so

Then one day his wife dies
And finally he understands
FEELS the rage
FEELS how ONLY THAT would seem enough to salve the pain

This refers to the experience of Renato Rosaldo, discussed in Behar, 1996: 167)

There is something resonating here with the story of Buddhist and postmodern agency that I told in the last chapter. You can just imagine an academic debate on whether it is possible to understand the other, whether there is a shared humanity, the limits of knowing. I have read many myself – but Jackson, just like Hughie, reminds us that this is too binary - the question of whether it is possible to know the Other is not the right one - the question is, is it possible to know oneself and the other better.

Interviewing/listening

People talked about Yaks, told stories about yaks
Here is a picture of one for you, in Bhutan being used to carry loads across the mountains. Great brutes of strength, able to survive in the cold Himalayas in winter.

They would call us to take them to Nubra, then we would fetch the Yaks, snow up to the waist, it was, and the Yaks would go in front, with their legs, like this you know, and make a path for us
(interview with water mill owner)

there are only two yaks left now for the village, in the old days every house would have one, for the dzo, you know, now there is couple, just in case people need more dzo.
(interview with Blacksmith 1)

I understand – I have seen a herd, perhaps 50, 80 strong once. It does not surprise me that in Leh, the yak T-shirt seems to be one of the most popular in gift shops.

Ok, I exaggerate slightly, I admit. It is not that everyone talked of, them, but several people did, out of context to the question, surprising stories. I write about yaks, because people wanted to talk about yaks. This is their response – I ask about school, they talk about yaks. I offer open questions and try to hear what is said in reply.

It is not that yaks are not relevant - something about yaks are pulled out when the question comes about the past. There are limits of my knowing. To ask more would be impolite, to ignore rude so I write as best I can. Perhaps yaks symbolise the past glories of Ladakh. Ladakhis are quite yak-like, I think – tough, squat, mountain lovers.

There are many conversations during the fieldwork. Many of these are in English – with the NGO staff, the education officials, with younger or more educated monks. Most in the villages are conducted in Ladakhi, with a translator – Gyatso in Saboo, the young college guy back for the summer holidays; in Likkir by Stanzin, a man I meet while walking who becomes a friend.

I do not deny that not speaking Ladakhi has disadvantages - the possible understandings so much greater – but to get my Ladakh to a level that I could use it more effectively than with a translator would be difficult. I choose to spend my time focussing on other things.

I ask questions they answer, sometimes they ask me questions. The stories flow better sometime than others, some people like to talk, others are shy, unsure what this English guy is really all about. Mostly these encounters are listenings.

But this translation process has advantages too, I quickly realise. Perhaps we should not see this purely as a disadvantage, as Riessman, notes

I use different strategies to play down my authority in these interviews. I introduce myself as a teacher, who is now a student, rather than as a researcher. But I also try to offer narrative equality.(Hymes, 1996), meaning that when I offer opinion, too, see this as only fair, when I am asking them this, that when I am asked about how is money being a student, I answer. Seeing an interview as a co-construction, see this as part of constructing equality, trust. There is a relational methodology here (Barton, 2003)

Multiple reading are potential in all narrative work. (...) translation can open up ambiguities of meaning that are hidden in "same language" texts. When we have a common language with our informants, we tend to easily assume that we know what they are saying, and alternative readings get obscured or even ignored, because of the theoretical assumptions we bring to the work.

(Riessman, 2000: 144)

The translated nature of much of the interviews means that I have not given close readings of the text, have rather sought to be, as Riessman suggests, both tentative and unassuming in interpretations. This is consistent, I feel, given my theoretical positioning.

But the translation process has other advantages too. The conversations are slowed down 1/2 speed as each exchange passes through Gyatso. So the conversations are rich in time – I ask a question, get chance to hear the language – to watch Gyatso as he talks, to watch the blacksmith or Amchi as she listens to him, as she looks at him. I get to watch this conversation as well as being part of it – it is slowed open, and in the spaces I can try and hear better – listen to other things, look around, absorb the experience.

'the researcher then fills this indeterminate openness with his / her interpretive baggage, imposes names, categories, constructions, conceptual schemas, theories upon the unknowable and believes that the indeterminate in now located, constructed known order has been created.'
(Scheurich, 1997:74)

I know that in these conversations we are playing familiar roles - principally not as interviewer and interviewee, but as a guest and host, sitting quietly drinking tea. I know that should I have just turned up at the front door, and said nothing at all, that I would be ushered into the kitchen, and that someone, without talking, would rush off to make tea.

People's generosity makes the interviewing process easy for me, so while I always take along my recorder, but often these interviews are unrecorded, as it intrudes between us, this black machine.

I ask Nawang if I should offer something to people for talking with me – Just some biscuits he says – I remember back to Bhutan - always take biscuits if you go to visit someone. He adds – 'Better still, take butter, then they will be so pleased you can go back as many times as you like'. So I take a ½ kg pack, some incense sticks and some biscuits as offerings.

Perhaps it is the pace of these conversations, but I find that if I go straight home and write down what they have said, I can remember most of it word for word – perhaps not quite in the right order, perhaps not perfectly, but good enough. These fieldnotes are already themselves layered accounts (Ronai, 1995) - transcripts, thoughts, feeling, stories.

Visual Methodologies

The Indian press was in town to cover the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Ladakh – a big event for a small place like Ladakh in a country the size of India. Walking around before the speaches and dances and songs began, I came across a press photographer mercilessley chasing a dancer around, positioning her like a statue, 'move your arm here, turn your head that way' – they clicking away, she uncomfortable – the exotic specimin from Ladakh, no doubt, for the urbanised Indian elite. So I 'fired' my camera at him, 'caught' him just at that moment of shock when the situation reversed, and he realised that he was under scrutiny.

Cameras 'take' photos – they are gaze, a power, they capture a bit of your moment, and it is taken away.

One day in Bhutan.

The whole school is lining the road that leads up from the village market to the school. We are waiting for the visit of the home minister. He is late, of course.

As we stand, a tourbus, no doubt on their way down to the border drives past, then stops. The tourists get out and snap away at this unusual happening – snap away at us – 700 people all lined up in our best outfits – and then drive off. 'Jesus', a friend said, laughing, 'its like being an animal at the Zoo.'

The only thing unusual about this was my positioning on the other side of the power lines. Ever since then, I have been sensitive to the issues around taking photographs

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So, I went 'traditional' – found a 'polaroid camera', cleared out Bristol's supply of film – and went off armed with my digital camera and my polaroid. I had a policy – only 'take' a digital photo of someone, if I can 'give' a polaroid of them in return.

The Polaroid was a great tool. I was teaching the class 8 maths – gave the camera and a film to one pair of students each day – 'take whatever photos you like – something about your village'. Each day, after class we would talk about the photos and their thoughts about them. I took photos of the photos and they got to keep the originals. But mostly the photos have less expectation – were simply taken when I could – as a context, to capture those parts of experience that are poorly suited to text, to remember by. Like the transcipts

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Springgay et al (2005) use the term 'a/r/tography'

> ***'A/r/tography – is a coming together of art and graphy, or image and word.'***
>
> ***(Springgay et al, 2005: 90)***

The photos that surround this text are used in the way that Trinh T. Minh-ha or O'Grady & Pike do, not as data to be analysed – but more as an alternative representation of that which stands outside language (Prosser, 1998). Perhaps photos stand as an extreme example of the 'writerly' text.

The data that came out of, that were constructed from these experiences – the memories, photos, reflections, recordings have been the basis for the writing of the poieses.

HOW
DRUKPA KUNLEY
VISITED
SABOO
FOR THE SAKE OF
ALL SENTIENT
BEINGS

We bow at the feet of Kunga Legpa,
Possessor of the bow and arrow that slays the Ten Enemies,
Master of the hunting dog that kills dualizing tendencies
And bearer of the shield of loving kindness, passion and patience
(Dowman (trans), 2000: 23)

Transporting himself to Saboo in an instant, in order to show his manifold powers, Kunga Legpa encountered a man working in the field at the end of the day. He knew no prophecy regarding him but saw that he looked troubled.

'What are you doing? Kunga Legpa asked him, as he sat down on a nearby stone to rest for a moment.

'Can't you see I am building a magnificent house for my family,' The man replied.

'I can see you are busy with something, but the important question is do you have any chang? The lama asked

The man looked sceptical at that. ***'I have a little, five measures worth, why do you ask me that ?*** the man questioned cautiously.

'Then I will stay and help you build your house, tomorrow. At that, Drukpa Kunley, lay down and went to sleep. Around midnight he was drinking the chang by the fire when a group of demons came with fire in their eyes and spears to slay him.

'Drukpa Kunley, leave here or we will eat you.', the leader said. Then the lama took out his flaming thunderbolt and the demons fled until they came to a cave. The lama sealed them in and went back to sleep. In the morning when the man came to start work, Drukpa Kunley had taken the house apart brick by brick with his magic and had made a big pile on one side of the field.

'What have you done to my house?' the man asked angrily. *Are you a demon come to torment me?*

There is a demon in my arse, but luckily for you I have not eaten any beans since last week", The lama replied, *'I have built a tower for you instead of a house, so that you can have the tallest building in the village and show to everyone just how many bricks you are able to buy. You see I have made steps in the side so you can climb to the top. Let's go.'*

Drukpa Kunley flew up to the top, and sat and waited while the man climbed slowly up, but the tower was unstable and when he arrived at the top, the tower began to collapse and the man and tower fell down to earth again.

'Ha, ha, where is your house now?', the lama said laughing hysterically.

The man, getting up, bruised and angry, started shouting at the lama, *What have you done to my house?*

'Last night the demons of envy that were attacking you came here, and I banished them in a rock. Now you have banished the house that they built. Go and tend to your family, not your neighbours.' Drukpa Kunley said.

The man bowed low, down before the lama, who went off with the last of the chang.

THIRD POIESIS

LOST IN TRANSMISSION

Poiesis Outline

Lost in Transmision

PROLOGUE

This poiesis traces the process of change within the indigenous knowledge practices of Saboo village, and is a response to a month long stay there. As Gyatso and I wandered, we talked with many people who embodied different types of community knowledge – the blacksmiths, the traditional healer, the grinding mill owner, the monks, farmers, the 'lorepas' (the cow masters), the 'chur-pons' (the waterlords), and the Goba (village head) amongst others.

These conversations aimed to get a sense of the ways that western education was impacting upon their lives, work and knowledge. Although in a follow up visit to the village I would spent time teaching in the village school, at this time, I wished to circle around it, seeing the effects as its impact rippled though these practices.

Many of the indigenous practices were found to be in a fragile state, and in danger of being lost within a generation. I have used the expression 'lost in transmission' to describe what I see as the main problem – that these knowledge are simply not being 'practiced' by the next generation.

In attempting to understand these processes, I offer the concept of a 'knowledge habitat' to make present a landscape within which to locate an embodied view of knowledge. A consideration of the nature of the indigenous knowledge habitat in Saboo village offers a way to understand how changing patterns of livelihood associated with development has created ruptures not only in the physical practices of indigenous knowledge, but also through changing relationships to time, and community that themselves are deeply implicated in the loss.

LOST IN TRANSMISSION

The habitat of common knowledge

As we set off to climb the pass, I am surprised to see smoke rising from the low stone huts that mark the 'pulu', the summer grazing grounds at the top of each valley, where, as if reluctant to give up its duty of refuge to those who live within it, the valley offers one last open, sheltered place before the path must wind its way upwards more steeply.

Every other pulu we have passed through has been empty, but here, two men are still following the traditional summer habit of going up with the animals for grazing - or perhaps not.

As we approach, they point us towards a large cloth on the floor upon which are laid a selection of bronze spoons and cups that they have made, for passers by - mostly trekking tourists and their entourages to buy should they wish.

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The scene is more unexpected than it should be, perhaps – accustomed as I am to buying things in shops – but I am here in Ladakh where old silk routes crisscross the landscape, and where such high altitude trading stretches back across the centuries. So I buy a spoon, and use it for tea. I enjoy its workmanship, and the fact that, at more than 4000m, it is likely to be my highest purchase.

———

It is not by chance that this spoon is located here. We are in the Mountains that surround the village of Chilling, famous for its metalworkers that are reputedly,

> ***descended from artisans brought from Nepal by order of Gyal katun, Senggye Namgal's mother, to construct the gigantic Buddha image at Shey.***
>
> ***(Rizvi, 1983: 138)***

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This metal working knowledge is not only embodied in these old men, traced back to the 17th century, it is located – quite literally – in the valleys and mountains that surround the village of Chilling, where the ore that is used to make these spoons is found.

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Later, I am staying for a week in Likkir with a Ladakhi friend, Stanzin. I have heard a lot about the ceramics that it is famous for. The clay that can be used for making pots is found nearby. While I am here I try to meet with the three men who are most famous for doing ceramics – I do not manage to – one is acting as a guide for a trekking group, one is working in construction, one is in Leh. ***'No-one is doing ceramics now'***, Stanzin says.

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This is a different way of thinking about indigenous knowledge - not only practiced, not only embodied, but also located – located in a particular knowledge habitat. 'Knowledge habitat' – the phrase perhaps offers something, new ways to think about indigenous knowledge - located in place – in the dry high latitude

desert landscape. If indigenous knowledge is understood as located, understood intimately, what is the nature of its location?

This knowledge habitat has other dimensions to it not only the physical and, as Gyatso and I wander around Saboo village talking to the people about their livelihoods – the two blacksmiths, the Amchi, the rantok owner, the Water master, and the cow man, we begin to get a sense of its connections, its dimensions.

Gyatso and I are visiting the owner of the grinding mill. The inside of the low stone igloo shaped building is white with last year's flour. The barley is still only inches high – still months away from harvesting, grinding – plenty of time to clean and repair this water grinding mill.

I am fascinated by this visit - the connection back to that moment that I have loaded with meaning as the start of it all – the start of this thesis at least. This 'rantok', I learn is seventy, maybe eighty years old. The water is good here in Saboo, fed from dependable glaciers that, in years gone by, would bring donkeys loaded with sacks of grain from neighbouring villages for grindings. But the time of the rantok has passed,

Along this river there used to be 13, but now there are only three still working. People stopped repairing them. Only those people who live nearby repair their's now.

The Rantok is located in a habitat of time that is about community,

Owner: Before, people would come 2,3 families together bring their grain, and they would sit and eat and drink together, while it was working
Dave: How long does it take?
Owner: Maybe 2 hours

Located too in a habitat of time that offers a different economy,

The rantok is not used on a cash basis, but in a cooperative basic, they do some work in return or similar, so maybe that's why they don't want work now. No-one wants to give time.

I begin to try to map out the dimensions of the habitat of the indigenous knowledge that the people I talk with express. Expressions emerge as we talk –

'this is slow work,
'this is hard work',
'this work is good for the village',
'this is good for poor people'
'I am used to this work'.

I had not expected to write about dung – like the Dzo, this was not part of my research questions – but it kept reappearing – As I saw the piles neatly stacked on the side of the houses, as I saw people heading off into the mountains to collect it, as it became a topic of conversation.

According to historical record, the founder of Saboo village was a group of Me-nag people, descending from Eastern Tibet. With the passage of time, the village with the ancient name "sufat" became popularly renamed Saboo. The name derives from two words: "sa" meaning soil, and "phud', meaning the top quality thing presentable to the gods". (Shakpso, unpublished article: 1)

Blacksmith: But the people are different now. Early people used to be good, share everything, now people are selfish, they just see their self interest
Dave: Why do people become like this
Blacksmith: It depends on the time, because the times are changing
Dave: why are times changing
Blacksmith: in old times people's room will be dirty, and people don't feel uncomfortable, before people used to keep smoke, but now they only want a clean room, people are not using cow dung, now people are changed, now they want to keep their room clean.
Dave: I see you have lots of cow dung.
Blacksmith: cow dung is very expensive these days.
Dave: But cheaper than wood
Blacksmith: Cheaper than wood

There is a connection being made, less causal than symbolic – the Saboopa of now - clean selfish people, and the Saboopa of before - dirt loving cooperative ones.

The blacksmiths of Saboo are making stoves – large, heavy, heavily decorated, beautiful, metal stoves, called 'tab'. No doubt in a more marketised context these stoves would be branded as 'multi-fuel', 'multifunction'- burning both wood and dung. For the blacksmiths, dung is part of their world, part of their producing that stands in contrast to the 'clean' world of gas stoves.

Nowadays people are using modern techniques so in case if the road is closed it will be difficult to bring gas, and then it will come again to this product, maybe if the road closes, it will come again.

Here there is no need of gas, we can put cow dung, wood. In future poor people will privilege this one. Rich people they take only for show piece like that, they don't use to take for purpose to cook, for decoration only.

This one is good for cooking for 15 people. You can cook four dishes at one time. It gets hot in five minutes only.

The blacksmiths emphasise the usefulness, the appropriateness of their productions - burning locally available, renewable resources, offering room heating as well as cooking in a cold climate – but we might equally use the term sustainable. The 'Tabs' are even made from recycled oil drums.

Let me be more explicit here – the blacksmiths produce functioning stoves that are valued as objects of beauty. They are beautiful. I would have one too. And I agree with his assessment - of all the houses I entered, I only saw one that was being used.

But the blacksmith alludes to more here – this is a contrast not only between 'modern techniques' and 'original ones' – it is also fundamentally one between the rich and the poor.

'Nowadays there is lots of demand', because ***'the rich take for show'*** – but ***'it is the poor who will privilege this one in future'***.

This knowledge/product is **valued** by the rich (Rs 20,000-30,000, depending on size, design), but it is fundamentally a knowledge/product **for** the poor.

Gramsci uses the term 'organic' to differentiate between knowledge that is emancipatory and that which is oppressive (Gramsci, 1985). It is a helpful term here. The knowledge of making these stoves, I bring in here as indigenous knowledge – community knowledge that stands in contrast to 'modern techniques'. But this is not ancient knowledge, it is contemporary knowledge that, as Santos points out, has been made historical by the monoculture of linear time. This knowledge that the blacksmith uses is not ancient – it simply has an organic lineage,

> ***There were three people, Nimoo, Padma and Spalba, they made the first tab. People, first they requested to take the smoke out the room, to make chimney, and then, after that they made a tab. They covered the earth stove with metal. There is soil inside the tab. It came from Nimoo, Spalba and Padma.***

It is not only the blacksmiths that make the connection between their knowledge and its economic location – that see their knowledge as knowledge in service of the people of the village. I am talking with the village Amchi, the traditional herbal healer, in her kitchen.

> ***Dave: What do you see the role of the Amchi in the village?***
> ***Amchi: the village that is near to the city, Amchi is not so important, but the village that is far away is very important because bleeding, we have to stop immediately, so Amchi can do that one, she can stop blood immediately. For rich people it is OK, they can manage to go to good doctor, and so the poor people, Amchi is very important for them.***

Indigenous knowledge in the service of the poor. The Amchi did not charge a set fee for her services, simply took whatever the person offered and so this is knowledge whose sphere of movement is increasingly the poor.

> ***Dave: The government is not giving salary to Amchi?***
> ***Amchi: (Laughing) not giving, only RS 200 per month***
> ***Dave: Why doesn't the government support Amchi?***
> ***Amchi: I can't say anything about that. It would be better if government could support. The medicines are expensive***
> ***Dave: You have to buy medicines***
> ***Amchi: Some we get for mountain, but difficult, some we get from down. This much medicine RS 4000.***

I come to realise as I listen to her talk that it is this that is the implicit in my concern for indigenous knowledge – what drives me. When indigenous knowledge is lost it is the poor that suffer the most. It is not the rich who can afford, as the Amchi says, to go to the doctor, who will suffer if there is no Amchi in the village; it will not be the rich, who can afford to buy gas bottles, who suffer if there is no-one to make a tab anymore.

The terminology of Amchi is derived from an original world of Am Rjay (superior of all). Its origins could be traced back to the main source i.e. India, where, more than 2500 years ago Buddha delivered a medical text which is known as Vimalagotra. (…) This system was later on greatly improved and developed by many famous scholar and physicians like Kumarajiva, Aryadeva, chantadeva and Asvagosha etc. (…) Perhaps the first medial man to introduce this medical science to Ladakh was Rinchen Zangpo (10th A.D.). (Phuntshog, S.T., 1989:20-21)

The habitat begins to be made a little more visible – this is an indigenous knowledge habitat that is one rich in time, is one located in local resources, is one directed to the 'good of the village'.

The question of young people being trained to continue craft traditions was something that I asked all the people I talked with. I didn't realise it when I first talked with the blacksmiths, but there was another reason why they were particularly pessimistic about the chances of the continuation of their craft in Ladakh. Why I heard,

Student: Early people, they are using this one, now modern house they just keep for decoration. They are using gas
Dave: Anyone here is using tab
Teacher: They have but they can't use
D: So is blacksmith a good job?
St: The blacksmith is good for income, but the people they don't respect
D: Why they don't respect?
St: people think this is a less job
Angmo: We always advise people that you can remove your mind
D: You think anyone will choose to become blacksmith that is not from blacksmith family?
St: No

> ***Dave: What is the future of this work?***
> ***Blacksmith 1: It will be finished, no-one is there, no-one will do it.***

And,

> ***Dave: If someone came to you will you teach them***
> ***Blacksmith 2: Yes, of course***
> ***Dave: Has anyone ever come***
> ***Blacksmith 2: It is hard work, no-one will come for this job.***

And,

> ***Blacksmith 1: Actually I have told my children to do this work, but they don't want to do. You can't force your children to follow. I would teach anyone who learn. Actually I kept 2/3 guys to help, but it is difficult work, they ran away.***

I was talking with a new college graduate. Gyatso has set this up himself. I had not asked, suggested this, but was simply taken to meet Phuntshok. '***You have met lots of old people, you should meet someone younger'***, he said.

I will talk more about Phuntshok later, but in his 'out of station' education in Chandigarrh (he was just completing his postgraduate degree in sociology) and the obvious wealth of his family house, the conversation was a different one to most – and not only because this was conducted in English. He had been explaining how people were putting their money into building new houses – how the family unit was becoming nuclear.

> ***Dave: The blacksmith said a similar thing, though he put it slightly differently. Do you know him?***
> ***Phuntshok: I know who he is, but we don't talk***

The sentence seemed heavy, loaded with meaning, but with what?

> *The hierarchy (...) placed the king unquestionably at the top. Next cane the Jo or Lords. Next to the Royalty is Mangrigs or Mi-mangs (commoners). The commoners the Rigs-ngan or low class families such as Gara (Smith) Mon (Carpenter) and Beda (musician)*
> *Shakspo, N.T. (2005) The comprehension of Spoken Ladakhi, Unpublished paper.*

> *I know who he is but we don't talk.*

The hermeneutic cycle of rereading, reinterpretation of data. I think again how should I interpret 'hard work'? The caste location of the blacksmiths, musicians and Mons (carpenters) are such that I can understand that the young would not wish to be associated with it.

This then, is one reading of the habitat of the indigenous knowledge practices that I have discussed – one of time richness, one of knowledge for the 'poor', one of 'embodiment', one of knowledge 'for the good of the village', and yes, in the case of the blacksmiths, 'low caste knowledge' too.

Taking an embodied view of knowledge perhaps might be novel for a western academic educational discourse that is used to thinking in abstracted terms of 'knowledge domains', 'conceptual frameworks', or 'worldviews' – but here in Saboo, this was taken for granted. It reappeared time and time again in the language of 'he is good with', 'she is perfect in', 'He is knowing all this', ' She can make all those things' – there is no abstracted knowledge here – only people and a respect for what they know, express, pass on. Whether it be knowledge to repair the rantok, heal the sick, looking after the broke leg of a dzo' or making a tab – this is knowledge that has accumulated in individuals through time and experience, and these individuals are afforded respect because of this knowledge.

And so, I come toward the end of this particular line of flight through the knowledge landscape of Saboo. There are other people to meet, other paths to explore, other readings to be made. This reading of the habitat of these indigenous knowledge practices offers new possible understandings of the mechanisms of its loss, and it is to this that we now turn.

Competing for Busy-ness.

> *If Ladakh is ever going to be developed we have to figure out how to make these people more greedy. You just can't motivate them otherwise.*
>
> *Development Commissioner in Ladakh, 1980,*
> *Quoted in Norberg - Hodge, 2000:141*

We had gone to meet one of the Chur-pons – the 'water lords' that distribute the water to the fields.

Be here at 6am the Goba (village head) had said – he will come then to open the pond.
We went, Gyatso and I, just before 6am.
He went down to the field, the Goba said
We go down
He has gone back up to the pond
we go back up
He has gone down again
Finally, frustrated, I understand – let us not rush around, let us just sit here, in this beautiful spot for a while, watching the sunrise and the Chur-pon will, when he has finished what he is doing, will come along.

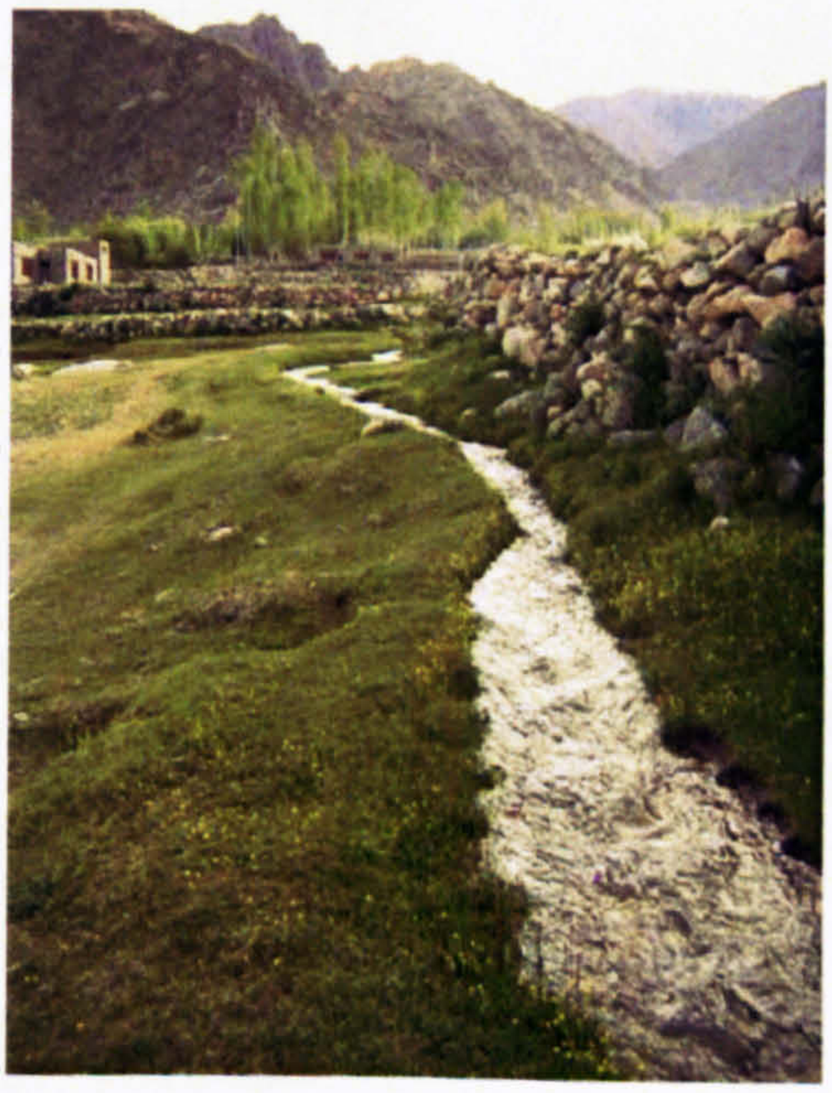
There is a particular quality to time here – it is present, like the wind, moves with you, dances with you. There is no point in trying to rush to catch it up, or guess its direction, only wait and try to sense its movement.

People meet, people talk, there are pauses in conversation - moments not so much of silence, but moments that, in the quietness, allow time to be present.

There is a particular quality to time here – it is undisciplined, yes, that's the right word, undisciplined. We might try for three days to meet with the Lorepa (cow man) – then suddenly one morning Gyatso wakes me up early, 'We can meet him now, lets go'.

Santos goes into great detail over the way that, through the 'monoculture of linear time' the West is hegemonic,

> ***The second logic resides in the "monoculture of linear time", the idea that history has a unique and well known meaning and direction. (...) This logic produces nonexistence by describing as backward whatever is asymmetrical vis-à-vis whatever is declared forward. It is according to this logic that western modernity produces the noncontemporaneity of the contemporaneous, and that the idea of simultaneity conceals the asymmetries of the historical times that converge into it.***
>
> ***(Santos, 2004: 15)***



For Santos, this is a critique of development, of the discursive dominance of linear progress, a critique that is able to show how,

> ***Once liberated from linear time and devolved to its own temporality, the activity of the African or Asian peasant stops being residual and becomes contemporaneous of the activity of the "hi-tech" farmer in the USA or the activity of the World Bank executive. By the same token, the presence or relevance of the ancestors in one's life in different cultures ceases to be an anachronistic manifestation of primitive religion or magic to become another way of experiencing contemporaneity.'***
>
> ***(Santos, 2004: 21)***

I agree with Santos – I wish to argue for the contemporary relevance of indigenous knowledge. I hear in conversations the ways that the future enters in, how time is no longer free to blow here and there, but disciplined, put into the service of the future, hear in every conversation the losses that fall through this rupture.

But there is more here, another way to understand the way that time is implicated in the hegemony of western knowledge – that this discussion alludes to - there is the hegemony of a particular relationship to time.

> ***Here we have Ladakhi time. If we call a meeting at 9am. People will come along at 10***
>
> ***(Teacher, Saboo Junior High School)***

Each place outside Europe I have been to, I have heard the same expression – 'we have Indian time', 'we have Bhutanese time', 'This is Zimbabwean time', 'Trinidadian time', Malawian time…

There are subtle difference to these alternative times, it seems to me, but all are spoken with knowledge of an encounter with a more disciplined time, and spoken with a hope, with an appeal, a counter hegemonic move - 'please understand, our time is not disciplined time, we exist **with** our time differently', then, perhaps more reflexively, 'we existed with our time differently - times are changing'.

Times are changing, beneath the apparent slowness in Saboo, there is a quiet 'busy-ness'/'business'.

We are talking with the lady who is the leader of the Ama Tsokpa group – the women's group that each village has, ***'is involved in keeping the traditions', 'has a lot of power, everyone does when the Ama Tsokpa say something' (Phuntshok).*** She does not have much time to talk, she explains, she is busy in the fields.

> *Dave: How many fields do you grow for yourself?*
> *Ama Tsokpa lady: Just one or two*
> *Dave: What do you do with the other?*
> *Ama Tsokpa lady: We grow potatoes and sell to the army*

There is reflexivity here. This is not an unknown paradox, people are aware of what changes are take place.

> *Monk: Before, everyone had free time, they would come here and there and chat to each other, now they don't have time they are busy running after money.*
> *Dave: Why do people run after money?*
> *Monk: People get a bit of money and then they run after more money*

This busy-ness, this changing relation to time, that comes from running after money affects life deeply. The paradox that though they have more, they enjoy less was strongly expressed by many people.

> *Dave: How have you seen Saboo changing?*
> *Blacksmith 2: Now people are having government job, morning go to office, so the person who stays at home, they are busy to work in the field*
> *Dave: So people who don't have government job are more busy too?*
> *Blacksmith 2: Now people don't have time to eat food only, they are busy doing work in the field. Before we were not able to get good food, rice like that, we can get only simple food, but people they can enjoy, sometime rest, sometime eat food - but now they can get good food, but no time to eat even. Now everyone is more busy. No-one is staying at home*
> *Dave: How does that affect the society?*
> *Blacksmith 2: Before at that time, they used to chat with each other, have party, before they would come here, had a chat, not these days, don't have time even to speak hello.*

Or,

Dave: Life was tough before, better now.
Ama Tsokpa lady: Tough before, but better before too. Now we can just put on the gas and make tea. Before we had to collect dung, make fire, it was hard work, and took time. But we could appreciate things more.

Phuntshok, the college graduate says,

From what I have seen Ladakhis are putting money into two things - education for their children and building houses.

I see the truth of what he says – everywhere in Saboo new houses are being built, there are only 40 students in the village school, while three bus loads of students commute in and out everyday to private schools in Leh, more study out of Ladakh altogether – private schools in Delhi, Dharamsala, Chandigarrh, Jammu.

And education, private education at least, is not cheap, must be paid for, must to earned for.

Later, I am in Lamayuru – the other side of Ladakh. We are walking around the monastery one evening as the sun is setting. It is late and we leave with the monk whose job it is to lock up. As we pass a prayer flag, he stops briefly to take out a carved stone from underneath a bundle of green leaves, and places it next to the flag.

I just finished this yesterday. It is so that people know which side of the prayer flag to walk.
It is amazing, my first time to see a newly carved one. There are thousands of old ones.
No-one is doing now
Where did you learn to do this?
My teacher was from Lingshed village. When I was young, there were 15 of us students, now there are only three are doing in the whole of Ladakh. There is myself, and one man from CIBS, and a third, but the third one he doesn't do it, now, he became a taxi driver.

CIBS is the Central Institute for Buddhist Studies, a college offering a curriculum of Buddhist philosophy and languages such as Sanskrit alongside a modern curriculum.

'He became a taxi driver'
The epitaph for many traditional practices

And yet, for many of the people I spoke with, people were busy chasing money, not so much in order to be able to send their children to a good school or build a big house, but rather that people did these things simply in order to compete with each other.

Rantok owner: If a person brings something, the other person also wants to bring that thing. If they build a new house, this person is also going to build a new house. If they bring a car, they also want a car.

Chairman, village education committee: People want a good school. It is not a question of money. It is competition. If they see their neighbour sending their children to private school they think, why shouldn't I send my child too.

Goba: Before people would work for the good of the village, now people work for the good of themselves. Tourism is there, money is there.
Dave: Why have these changes taken place?
Goba: Pupils go out to school, to Delhi and their places and they bring back these ideas to Ladakh, They see different ideas there and compete with each other. If one person wants a glass room, then another person wants it, to show each other they have power.

Whatever the unfolding of the conversation, at some point we would inevitably find ourselves here, to the new selfishness of people – at the mourning of the loss of things that were 'for the good of the village'. Here is Ishe Angmo, a grandmother, but all conversations touched upon something similar,

Dave: How has Saboo changed
Angmo: People have got much more selfish. Before people did things for the good of the village, now people are selfish
Dave: What makes people more selfish
Angmo: Running after money
Dave: Can you give examples of what you mean by more selfish
Angmo: not helpful to the village, now people only do things for themselves.

If these are some of the reason why there is a new busy-ness amongst Ladakhis, it was precisely this changing relationship to time that was implicated in the loss of participation in indigenous knowledge practices,

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For the Amchi,

Dave: Why do some people prefer doctor and some Amchi?
Amchi: The treatment of doctor is quick, within 1 2 3 days, but Amchi treatment is better, slow but perfect. The doctor treatment, you feel better now, but it will come again after some time, but Amchi treatment is perfect.
Dave: So some people like to get well too fast?
Amchi: These days we are in the developing stage. So all people want to feel better fast, and do job, like that

For the blacksmith,

Blacksmith 2: The young generation get bored to do like this work, they need a fast one only.
Dave: Why do you think they get bored: you don't get bored?
Blacksmith 2: I take interest out here. My father is doing this job, so I like it from a child.

To understand the full significance of the impact of this changing relationship to time, and the desire to chase after money, we must consider the nature of the indigenous knowledge habitat we looked at earlier, and how knowledge is transmitted within it.

This is knowledge lost because its learning is seen as a necessarily slow process – a 'step by step' knowledge/practice that was not simply learnt, but something that is, over time, become accustomed to.

> *Blacksmith 2: In a house, if a person is good in prayers and he is used to praying everyday, another person can learn from him, he can just today learn one line, next day another line, in two three years, he can learn the whole book. So, my son, if he is going on like that can learn this step by step.*

This is knowledge lost because of the destruction of the 'knowledge habitats' that, as we saw in dzo dancing, might allow its stories to survive.

> *Rantok owner: Now people only for breakfast and dinner, but many house, people are early to get bus and the evening there is TV to watch, people are not talking. Before in the evening people would get together and tell stories. It would be like school. Stories of this and that.*

This is knowledge lost because people have too little time to spend time chatting together while the grain is ground to flour. And yet, who will be most affected if the remaining three working Rantok of Saboo collapse? Not the cash rich who can afford to call the machine to do it for them.

I am saddened as I hear these stories. These are quiet losses, silent losses – there is a carelessness of this process, as knowledge is simply passed over, because people are two busy running after money to notice – too busy to go to the Amchi, too busy to use the Rantok, too busy to tell stories.

POSTSCRIPT

Understanding indigenous knowledge as embodied draws attention to the importance of the mechanisms of transmission from person to person. This poiesis suggests that this transmission is not taking place – that much indigenous knowledge is simply 'lost in transmission', as young people do not participate in the practices where such knowledge is enacted.

The idea of transmission is used to allude to its Buddhist philosophical meaning – of the direct person to person passing on of knowledge – to precisely that which cannot simply be codified and made available to others. It is used here, in sympathy with an embodied conceptualisation of knowledge to emphasise that which is personal, extra-codifiable – that which requires other language to express - 'used to', 'good with', 'expert in', 'experience of', that which requires 'time' to understand.

This poiesis has also proposed an understanding of indigenous knowledge as located, and offered the term 'knowledge habitat' as a useful way to conceptualise the locatedness of this knowledge. This location, and the knowledge habitat have both physical and non-physical dimensions. The physical dimension offers a way to conceptualise the geographical dimensions of 'practice', and the very physicality of young peoples non - participation in these practices can be seen as an explanation, at one level, of the loss of indigenous knowledge.

The concept of a knowledge habitat, however allows for non physical dimensions of indigenous knowledge to be discussed in ways that go beyond failure to participate. Understanding the habitat of indigenous knowledge as time rich, co-operative, knowledge for the village, suggests new dimensions of rupture of indigenous knowledge.

Perhaps the strongest of the themes to emerge from the data was a changing relationship to time brought on by changing patterns of livelihoods, with the new 'busy-ness', and associated competitiveness, altering the knowledge habitat of the village in such a way that indigenous knowledge was often simply carelessly neglected in the rush.

Such an analysis might seem rather uncritical from the perspective of the theoretical perspective that I have adopted, and yet, the research suggests that, if we are to understand the creation of absence, that Santos suggests we should, then we should broaden our understandings to include carelessness, the simple lack of attention, as being as damaging as more active processes of silencing and absenting.

A description of indigenous knowledge here as subaltern, would be well suited - knowledge that stands in opposition to western knowledge, knowledge that is available, for now, for the poor to access. Of course, while I might seek to emphasise the resistive association of subaltern, we cannot overlook its principal meaning. Perhaps the deepest embedding of the development discourse is to be found in the paradox that it was precisely the 'common' dimension of these knowledges that undermined their standing in the village. It was precisely because it was knowledge for the poor, that meant that, in order to compete with ones neighbours, one would not use it, or participate in it. Someone would not use the rantok, precisely because it would suggest that you didn't have money to use the machine. One would not keep your child in the government school, precisely because it would suggest that you didn't have money to send to private school.

In the next poiesis, the analysis moves directly to the school itself as a site of creation of ruptures in the knowledge habitat, drawing attention to the act of displacement that removes young people from possible participation in indigenous knowledge practices. First something about story and writing.

CHAPTER III

CRITICAL NARRATIVES

This chapter is about narratives, about the creative space between the act of experiencing and the act of writing, about poiesis. The critical narrative approach that I have outlined sees research writing not as a representational activity that follows on from other forms of knowing, but seeks to place writing as an intrinsic aspect of the 'knowledge production' process. In particular, this chapter argues that, for research to be coherent, a form of writing needs to be adopted that is consistent with both theoretical and experiential dimensions of the research. For this research, that emphasises the experiential as a counter hegemonic space, a form of 'messy text' is proposed that juxtaposes theory, experience and findings in a way that draws attention to the partiality of embodied ways of knowing.

Chapter Outline

IIIA – Writing/inquiry/poiesis

IIIB Craftlines
Milan Kundera
Elizabeth St.Pierre
Maya Angelou
Trinh T. Minh ha
Peter Clough
Drukpa Kunley

IIIC Wandering around the corners of a thought
Experiencing / responding
Wandering
Juxtaposing
Writing meditation

IIID Inappropriate narratives

IIIA WRITING/INQUIRY/POIESIS

His story:
I am from Saboo only, I went to school in Saboo. Really there was a school here then? Yes not a proper school, just under a tree we had these small boards to write on. I only stayed for six months. We had no book. Only after class three did students get books. I went to Lhasa for study. It took me six months to get to Tibet. Most people they went Changtang side, but this wasn't possible so I went via Delhi, and Bhutan. From Bhutan 20 days to (name, unheard), from there, 10 days to Lhasa. How did you find the way? It was easy in those days. Lots of people were going and coming. Did you have any friends with you? Not friends, but I went with two other people. How was Tibet? Wonderful. We did not want to leave such a wonderful place, In fact I spent my time sitting and chatting and enjoying, I was there 13 years. I went when I was thirteen, and stayed for 13 years. I didn't want to return - only the Chinese came so I was forced to. I came back, then after 8 years the Chinese invaded. It was a big city, so wonderful. But the Chinese came and knocked down the walls of the Gompa. You are still very strong. I have no work, only praying. I am happy.

The old monk, a twinkle in his eye, laughs.
Gyatso smiles, "He asked me where I was from. I said I was from here. He thought I was from another village".

Soon, this monk would be telling us about his childhood in Tibet, about how Saboo Village had changed, his theories on why people are not strong anymore, and the importance of turning the other cheek; but right now he was laughing, and it felt like a gift.

I know that I should be fast forwarding through this bit, get to the real stuff, to the 'data', his words, given in response to my questions, translated by Gyatso, written down afterwards, but I wish to linger here in this moment for a while.

Maya Angelou, in a radio interview (Angelou, 2006) talks about how, when she wished to write her autobiography, would sit in a hotel room and transport herself back to each and every moment - to sit and meditate, 'no matter how long it took', until she could once again feel what each moment was like, remember the smells and fears and sights.

And so, I wish to linger in that laughter. Not to rush forwards, but to remain here and feel the meaning of that laughter, how this laughter is connected through the data, what it might mean for the research questions.

Deleuze writes,

> *Spinoza or Nietzsche are philosophers whose critical and destructive powers are without equal, but this power always springs from affirmation, from joy, from a cult of affirmation and joy, from the exigency of life against those who would mutilate and mortify it.*
>
> *(Deleuze, 2002:144)*

Wait a moment. Before we head off down another theoretical 'line of flight' into a discussion on the place of joy within a western emancipatory project, we should not forget that it is an old Buddhist monk that Gyatso and I are talking with - what relevance, what use, is Deleuze to him?

There is a spectre here, as the shadow of Eurocentrism briefly glides over this peaceful monastery in Saboo. The shadow rests over the encounter - between an old monk, spending his twilight years in the same village that he was born, at 3500m in Ladakh and the 30 something English traveller/would be researcher passing through. What relevance, what use is Deleuze to this monk?

This question is not, I think, the correct one – the directionality is altogether different. The question is better formed, 'what use are Deleuzian ideas in allowing me to understand a little more about what takes place between us when we encounter?'

The monk and I encounter, mediated by Gyatso

It is an encounter that begins in laugher, in delight. My delight I am sure of, the monk's I infer from his laughter and Gyatso's from the smile that is hesitant, as it should be for a young man meeting such a venerable person. His lack of effusiveness should not be taken as offence. My time in Bhutan is sufficient I feel to be at least a little more than uncertain of this.

———

I take away his words, written down in my notebook, soon to be revealed, typed here, transported half way around the world, displaced from person, context, cut up, thematised even, displaced. But I repeat, this is not an interview, cannot, should not, be reduced to a mechanistic transfer of words, supposed thoughts, from one person to another. It is an encounter.

———

I am writing an abstract of my research a few days before this. It includes,

> ***One of the themes of my research has been how to explore the ways that indigenous knowledge can be conceptualised without appropriation - where what is valuable about such alternative knowing is not simply lost in the inevitable translation to western forms of representation.***

———

The first time I came across the idea of 'transmission', I was confused. One of the ways that Buddhist texts appear is as Sutras, 'narratives' of the Buddhas, and indeed, one can go to the texts and read these stories, and so why therefore, I wandered, do Buddhists go to lamas to 'receive' these sutras.

I translate the word 'transmission' inside my head into social science speak – ***'Something of the meaning is not available through words alone'.***

———

This encounter with the monk has been somehow transformative. For many hours afterwards I feel the presence of this encounter. I think about embodiment – how the knowledge that the monk has is not available to be discussed as such – that even the idea of an indigenous knowledge practice is limiting, that ***'what is valuable about such alternative ways of knowing'*** is embodied, perhaps available only for transmission from person to person.

———

What the monk offers is not only his words. I write earlier about Maya Angelou, and am able here to express my respect and her thoughts, and yet, surely it is sound of her voice that makes you wish to jump into its luxuriance that is what should be told of. A moment of that voice would tell you more than these words ever could.

———

Fieldnote:
What is the place of laughter in social science research - *laughter as truth?*

Narrative can no longer be considered simply as a determinant of discourse and a format of textuality. Narrative is also an indigenous feature of human action, providing the context and horizon for the emplotment of the multiple activities of the self against the backdrop of a tradition of communicative practices.
(Schrag, 1997: 41)

You can always tell someone who has been living with the Dharma for a long time, they have a twinkle in their eyes.
(Hughie)

In realising that the non clinging and
illuminating mind,
is embodied in bliss and transcends all playwords,
one sees his mind's nature as clearly as
great Space.

This is the sign of the consummation
of the Stage of Away-from-Playwords.
Though one talks about the stage of
Away-from-Playwords,
Still he is declaring this and that;
In spite of illustrating what is beyond
all words,
Still he is but piling words on words.

He then, is the ignorant one,
Who with the self-clinging Meditates.
In the stage of Away from Playwords,
There is no such thing as this.
In Chang, (trans.) 1999: 98-99

Of course, one cannot but offer an ironic, delightful smile at the wonderfully wordy way that this call to wordlessness has been crafted. This, just part of one of the 'Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa' (Chang, (Trans.) 1999), written perhaps 1000 years ago, is loved for its narrative mixture of story and song.

The 'Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa' is not unreflexive of its wordiness. It chooses, uses, provokes, leads us in, offers spaces and uncertainties, carries us forwards, shocks and confuses. They are insufficient, yet they are all we have – our necessary illusions.

If I write here 'Narrative is a human achievement', is this an assertion that needs justification? What would be necessary justification to convince you? Perhaps it is simply the way that I have found to understand wordiness?

If humans understand experientially, we nevertheless exist socially. The necessity of sharing with others what we must experience individually leads to narrative; narrative is one of the ways that we have found to traverse the liminal space between us.

Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with stories that we tell and hear told, with the stories that we dream or imagine or would like to tell. All these stories are reworked in that story of our own lives which we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semiconscious, virtually uninterrupted monologue. We live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meanings of our past actions, anticipating the outcomes of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed. We explain our actions in terms of plots, and often no other form of explanation can produce sensible statements.'

(Polkinghorne, 1988: 160, quoted in Lewis, 2006: 832)

So, let me set off again, and try to approach the clearing in the forest from the other side, as it were, having travelled through different lands.

Arriving to Bhutan as a science teacher, the meanings of the words of those around me eluded for a long time. I entered into a world where words were not spoken lightly nor wasted. Like an iceberg, for each word spoke, eight were submerged just below hearing.

Of course, as the months went by, my own chatter began to sound excessive, rantings in a quieter world - and finally, I began to tune in, speak less, listen more, hear what was unspoken but being said.

The experience of these months, while I could not hear well enough, has been an experience that I have often returned to. Later, I thought about it in terms of Barthes' (1990) distinction between 'readerly' and 'writerly' texts, dubbing it a type of 'speakerly' talk in the way that it demanded acts of interpretation and invited reflexivity. Soon, I shall be putting this experience to work again, to explain to you why I have chosen the ancient Greek term Poiesis to signify some sections of this thesis.

But, first, I must return to paradox of this experience – the paradox of ***'uncertainty/understanding*** made evident through 'speakerly' talk - to the spiralling that goes both outwards and inwards - outwards to the speaker, to the multiplicities of meaning that might be being said, and inwards towards the multiplicity of meanings that are able to be heard.

The space between one person and the next is opened up, and within this uncomfortable liminality the illusion of understanding is cracked and a truth pokes out its head - that the words of another are words only of invitation. That understanding is a double movement – an active moving forward to embrace another, to search for the meanings hidden within, if we care to, and a moving inwards to search for the limits to our own understandings, if we dare to. An encounter that holds the possibility of transformation.

Uncertainty - the air that breathes life into understanding. Understandings that we should hold lightly, lest they make the world too certain, too knowable, seduce us into thinking that we know the world.

Coherence is a word that is much used in the academic world that I have access to as a research student. Perhaps it has filled up the space once occupied by other words - with more positivist associations - to express the possibility of research excellence.

My theoretical 'constellation' has already rejected the idea that any research position can have an essential 'coherence', rather arguing that coherence is something that must be constructed anew each time in the form of the connections that different theoretical and experiential iterations implicate each other within.

"Messy texts moved back and forth between description, interpretation, and voice. These texts erase the dividing line between observer and observed. In them, the writer is transformed into a scribe who writes for rather than about the individuals being studied. Still, these texts make the writer's experiences central to the topic at hand. The messy text produces local, situated knowledge about the practices of a given group and its culture. There is always a stress on the historical contingencies and social processes that shape at play on the situations and persons under study."
(Denzin, 1997: 225)

I could write orderly linear texts - perhaps they would make you relax into their authoritative discourse - but this would not be coherent. Please don't forget, these 'messy texts' that I am producing are not, to use Santos again, celebratory postmodernist writings, but rather ones that wish to reclaim uncertainty from its definitional 'lack' into a counter hegemonic 'partial knowing' that stands against the certainty that has delegitimised indigenous knowledge.

I am aware that I am somewhat trapped inside a paradox – to use language that would be less coherent but more authoritative, or to use language that chooses to give away its authority in the search for greater coherence with my theoretical choices. Of course, you know already which I prefer, which of these is my narrative ambition. I wish to produce a text that,

> *can absorb the full weight of experience, is able to express the dynamic between theory and experience, is reflexive of its own coming to know, allows for the subjectivity of Ladakhis and of my own, engages in complexity, can capture the fleeting unfolding of social life, plays down its own authority, empathises the contingent, is able to capture the paradoxical nature of human existence, is able, as far as any text can be, to point to the embodied nature of human knowing.*

Much of my time in this research has been spent learning to 'craft' within the space that is formed out of theory, writing, representation and analysis. Sculpting text and ideas into forms that might find ways to hold these themes within them.

There are many terms that I could perhaps have used to describe the texts that I have produced - 'messy texts' (Marcus, 1994), 'layered narratives' (Ronai, 1995) – but I have chosen another term that I have take from Taussig – poiesis.

> *(...) at this point the critic fumbles the pass and the "literary turn" in the social sciences and historical studies yields naught else but more meta-commentary in place of poiesis, little by way of making anew.*
>
> *(Taussig, 1993: xvi-xvii)*

"The concept that rules the sociology of emergences is the concept of Not Yet', (a) more complex category because it expresses what exists as mere tendency, a movement that is latent in the very process of manifesting itself. The Not Yet is the way in which the future is inscribed in the present. It is not an indeterminate or infinite future, rather a concrete possibility and a capacity that neither exist in a vacuum nor are completely predetermined. Indeed, they actively re-determine all they touch, thus questioning the determinations that exist at a given moment."
(Santos, 2004: 24)

I use the term poiesis, to describe the research narratives that I have produced - prefer this term because I wish to emphasise research-as-praxis, its productivity, its 'world-making', to the world of the possible and the 'Not Yet' (Santos, 2004).

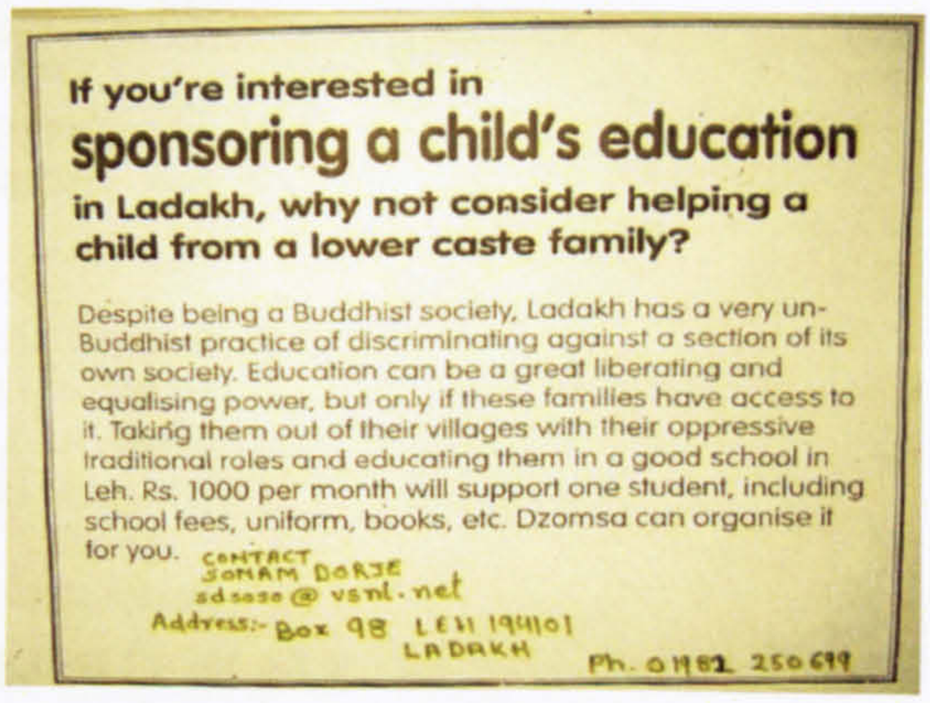
> *Poïesis means "to make" in ancient Greek. (creation, from poiein, to make) This word, the root of our modern "poetry", was first a verb, an action that transforms and continues the world. Neither technical production nor creation in the romantic sense, poïetic work reconciles thought with matter and time, and man with the world.*
>
> *(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poiesis, accessed 15th December, 2006)*

In choosing poiesis, I aim to offer an analysis of the data that is rich in lived experience, able to engage the readers in an emotional, more colourful, richer world. However, in making critical connections between the worlds and wider issues of inequality and power, seek to avoid the risk that Denzin (1997: 201-207) sees in much ethnographic poetics – that emotion is used as an authority to draw a particular view of the world that, in its insightfulness and colour, is taken as truth.

Rather, these texts aim to be messy texts that tack between voice, data, interpretation and theory, thereby foregrounding uncertainties, offering liminal spaces that draw attention to the limitations and perspectives of each, and perspectives, drawing a mosaic of knowing.

Dal tsir / Seating arrangement

Pools of apricot are they pooling.
Heaps of white butter are they heaping,
I the youth must rise and seat the guests;
I little Zbalu must rise and seat the guests;
The great Rgyalam may grace the golden throne!
Graceful Dugu-ma may grace the turquoise throne.
Father Stonba may sit on the Silver throne;
Mother Yum Snon may sit on the Sea shell throne!
The tiger's teeth like youths
May sit in the first front row!
The vulture like old men may head the right row,
The Buckwheat heaps like old ladies may head the left row.
The Men.ze like young ladies may sit by the old ladies.
The pebble like boys may sit amidst the youths.
The To-yoz like girls like girls may sit by the young ladies
The eighteen relatives on fathers side
May take seat in the right row;
The forty five relatives on mothers side
May take seat in the left row.
The seven noble members of 'neopa'
May all sit facing the guests.
The smooth music giving Mons
May take seat in the back row.
(In Sikander, 1997:59)



Apart from a condescending attitude to the Mons, and one or two other hereditary occupational groups such as blacksmiths, there is nothing like a caste system among the Buddhists
(Rizvi, 1983: 118)

Three voices on the question of class in Ladakhi society. Voices that exist at different moments, mediated through different genres. I cannot pretend that there is dialogue between these voices – except in my head, and now yours. This juxtaposition is already a form of analysis – this 'translation' of text from one place to another.

I can choose to find a way to resolve their contradictions through analysis – but we have met that approach before. It surfaced as one of the mechanisms that imperial discourse, in its intolerance for contradiction function. This is Santos' (2004) 'knowledge as regulation' heading from 'chaos' to 'order', or as Trinh T. Minh-ha puts it,

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> *members of dominant groups have always defined their subjectivity as mobile, changing, flexible, complex, and problematic (...) the subjectivity of their others remains uncomplicated, unsophisticated, unproblematic, verifiable, and knowable...' (...) '(m)arginalised people are always socialised to see things from more than their own point of view (...) they can never really afford to speak in the singular.*
>
> *(Trinh. T. Minh-ha, 1998: 8)*

It is not that I reject the idea of distillation, just that it should be clear what particular fraction of the mixture is being collected in the process. I do not wish to brush over the very contradictions Crehan (2002) points out Gramsci saw as a source of counter hegemonic potential, not should I mask this and pass over the opportunity for the reader to make alternative readings different from my own.

IIIB CRAFTLINES

> *I assume anyone engaged in a long term project develops a metaphor to capture the process*
>
> *(Mischler, 1999: 164).*

Mishler (1999) starts his book by offering a metaphor of himself as a builder – ***'constructing and rearranging units of meaningful discourse larger than words, sentences or paragraphs.' (ibid: xiii).*** Even more delightfully, he tells the story of a playwright who used the metaphor of writing a good play as being like baking a good lasagne – that it should be overstuffed!

In the end, I settled, with 'crafting' – to honour the community that this suggests, honouring to the practice of it, the learning of it, the teachers, the lineages, legacies and traditions.

It would be far from the truth, and unethical to pretend that my own poieses were a product of the lone scholar wrestling with representational and analytic implications of theory. These are peopled worlds – craftartists who are working on similar projects, others whose voices and work I appropriate here in order to find my own – Trinh T. Minh-ha, Milan Kundera, Peter Clough and others. In this section, I give an account of the voices of these those people whose craftlines I am working within.

Milan Kundera

One of my literary heroes is Milan Kundera. For many years, there was a theme of Eastern European literature through my readings – Kundera, Koestler, Havel. Now I see that perhaps what interested me was their concern with the operation of power and the possibility of resistance as played out through the day today lives of ordinary people.

———

We have met Kundera before in an earlier chapter with his ideas about the configurational role of the past, but in this context, it is perhaps two points that are worth mentioning.

First his style – the absence of the internal monologue in his characters. There is transparency between the voices of the characters, who are uncertain, who speak, and his own, narrating, theorising one. He is not violent to his characters – does not make them speak for him – they simply speak. Second, the possibilities of texts that are multi-sited. In 'The 'Book of laughter and forgetting' (1996) Kundera describes the work as,

> ***a novel on the form of variations. The various parts follow each other like the various stages of a voyage leading into the interior of a theme, the interior of a thought, the interior of a single, unique situation the understanding of which recedes from my sight into the distance***
>
> ***(Kundera, 1996: back cover)***

———

The seven poieses of this thesis, and to a lesser extent the chapters, follow this approach. Each is a trajectory of possible understanding that seeks to answer my research questions. Each poiesis describes a different, limited, 'coming to know', that overlap, building up a bricolage of knowing. The poieses do not triangulate as much as seek to connect, each one illuminating a different part of the rhizome, offering different responses to the research questions.

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Elizabeth St Pierre

St. Pierre is perhaps the academic who, drawing explicitly on Deleuze and Guattari use of this concept of the nomad, has written most about the possibilities of 'nomadic' writings,

> ***to travel in the thinking that writing produces in search of the field.***
>
> ***(St. Pierre, 1997: 365)***

The idea of nomadic writings, has a longer history that Deleuze and Guattari, however. Massumi (1987) draws a trajectory for this approach through Spinoza, Nietzsche, Artaud, Blanchot. St. Pierre, in discussing the implications of Deleuze and Guattari for academic writing, draws attention to the rhizomic potential of academic writing. If, as is the case for a rhizome, everything is connected to everything else, the question then becomes what is brought into a narrative? What ideas are allowed in?

———

I deliberately choose the word allowed. These are boundaries that are policed. I have noted one transgression already – to bring in the voices of those people with whom I spoke with outside of the formal data collection process. But there are others – are researchers emotions part of the data? What of experiences that are relevant but outside the data? Are 'non-western' theories allowed? Can I talk of experiences in Bhutan, though they are not part of the 'data' as such?

———

And it is a bringing in – that is its beauty, and its emancipatory potential. It is not a call to choose (to see the world one way rather that the other), it is a call to multiplicity - to see the world as many ways as you can, to bring in that which can add to the connective potential of the work.

———

Maya Angelou

> *I enchant myself. I go into the hotel room around 6am and sit there, and remember the sounds, and the smells, and the texture of the fabric on my skin and enchant myself. Sometimes it takes an hour, but when it does, it is wonderful.*
>
> *(Maya Angelou, 2006)*

From Maya Angelou I take this love of words – that she, for instance, 'enchants' herself, but more, as this quote shows, I appreciate the perspective she has on immersion in her data – in this case her life experiences. If data is more than words, if it is understood experientially, then immersion in the data becomes just this – a meditative process of revisiting and realising the significance of those moments.

In the next section of this chapter, I go into detail the analytic process that I have used, but Maya's quote is relevant to that discussion. Memory, is not, in my narrative framework static – it is not a photograph or snapshot of a moment, it is rather something that, as part of the past, can be interrogated, explored for meaning renarrated, reinterpreted, connected to, reinscribed with meanings, remembered – just as any other form of 'data' might be.

———

That in the case of memory there is no 'original' that we can go back to – no clean transcript that we can return to when we have become lost in our interpretations – is not, to my mind, sufficient cause to question its validity.

A transcript is always essentially meaning-less – the dry bones of one-time encounters, stripped of meaning-fulness, left for forensic pathologists to piece back together from these meagre fragments, what the meanings might have once been.

———

Memory of experience, however imperfect is a rich data compared to this. When, as in my case, the process of revising the moment can be done alongside rereading transcripts, it can only enhance the analysis.

———

Trinh T. Minh ha

> *(Trinh) cultivates a form of writing, filmmaking, and storytelling their embodies satori – "that Zen event defined as loss of meaning ... a speech-void" (Trinh, 1991, p.209), a certain awakening, in which new meanings are revealed.*
>
> *(Denzin, 1997: 82)*

———

The writing of Trinh T. Minh ha are spacious, where,

> *truth and certainty are constantly being displaced, deferred and postponed.*
>
> *(Denzin, 1997: 82)*

———

It as if her writing says, 'words are so assuming'

———

We sense the ethereal trace of her thoughts, and follow them, yet not too closely. We must let them wash over us, sense them as much as understand them.

———

Trinh is Buddhist, seeks I think, to incorporate Buddhist ideas into her work, though these are implicit. Certainly, I see resonance in the Buddhist distinction between trangdön and ngedön. Between the straightforward meaning and the true meaning.

> *Trangdön is the conceptual version of the dharma, the words as they exist in the texts and in discursive teaching, Ngedön is the inner meaning as realized in meditation.'*
>
> *(Ray, 2002: 363)*

> *'Ngeodön is the actual experience of unthinkable reality, while trangdön is that verbal expression which among all necessarily imperfect verbal expression, comes the closes to pointing the actual nature of things as they are.'*
>
> *Ray: 2002: 364)*

There are resonances, connections here – back to Kundera and the receding of the thought, to the 'away from playwords' of Buddhist thought, to Jackson's excesses of that which is beyond theory. They all seek to outline a space of knowing that is only available in silences.

Peter Clough

For Peter Clough, narrative research texts, offer a space that is not filled with methods or competencies, but with sensitivities: political, ethical, literary (Clough, 2005). The narratives that he writes are complete in themselves – there is no explicit academic narrative that surrounds, commentates, critiques upon the 'story' – the story contains all this within itself.

What is valuable for me is the ways that these narratives do contain both 'theory', and 'findings' – but in a form that invites the reader to both interpret and deconstruct, and not just, as in traditional research texts, its validity, but also of its possibility, of

its motivation. It is one half of a conversation that leaves you wanting to join in with it.

This is an important point, because it focused attention on the analytic process, and what the outcomes of this transformation of data need to be. For Clough, a good narrative,

> *Must be abstract (not the thing itself)*
> *Change (not just descriptive)*
> *Give pleasure*
>
> *(Clough, 2005)*

In writing narratives whose theory and findings are inseparable within the narrative, Clough's work, while not explicitly seeking a generalisation, leaves us with a call to see within the stories that which is meaningful to interpret our own understandings.

I appreciate this view; find its call to make narrative 'work' an important one. Clough shows us that narratives are capable of so much more than descriptions of events – that we should ask of them to do more work than this – the work of resonance, of persuasion, of provocation, of troubling.

That I have chosen a more explicit route is, to a large part because a PhD thesis is perhaps not the best place to leave theory at the level of the implicit. But also because I see that narratives can be both texts that both function as the outcome of an analytic process, and as starting points for further analysis – that can interweave narrative representations with more formal analyses and theoretical interpretations.

Drukpa Kunley

Drukpa Kunley was a 16th Century 'divine Madman' - an enlightened eccentric who belonged to the 'crazy wisdom' tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Adepts of this tradition (of which Milarepa, whose 'Hundred Thousand Songs' was quoted from earlier is better known) were wandering saints, who in their non adherence to conventional thoughts and behaviours sought to teach the lessons of spiritual life (Feuerstein, 2000)

> *Outrage and laughter are the skilful means he employs to shock people out of their lethargic acceptance of the neurotic status quo of their minds, and out of their attachment to conventional forms.*
>
> *(Feuerstein, 2000: 13)*

The Divine Madman (Dowman, 2000) is the account of the life and teachings of Drukpa Kunley, and charts his encounters as he crossed Tibet and Bhutan with commoners, monks, demons, and kings alike as he sought to enlighten others. The text itself is humorous, bawdy, at time shocking, always joyful.

———

One day (Drukpa Kunley) visited the monastery of Drepung. Sitting with the monks he thought he should play a joke on the Moral Guard.

'I would like to become a novice, ' he told them.

Where do you come from?' he was asked

I am a Drukpa,' he said.

Do the Drukpas have good voices?

'I don't have such a good voice,' he told them innocently, but I have a friend who is an excellent chanter.'

'Bring your friend with you tomorrow,' they told him.

The next day when the monks had assembled, the Lama brought a donkey by the ear, covering him with a red robe, and sat him down at the end of the line of monks.

'What is this!' exclaimed the Moral Guard in Wrath.

'This is my friend with the good voice,' Kunley told them, kicking the donkey to make it bray. The Guard chased him away with sticks, with the Lama shouting over his shoulder to them' You people care more about chanting than meditation!'.

(Gyamtso, 2000, translated by Dowman: 63-64)

Drukpa Kunley is particularly loved in Bhutan, and perhaps this is why I relate fondly to these stories, but I cannot help but see the significance of these stories for my work. His eternal quest to make people reflect on the absurdity of their existence would seem particularly relevant to a desire to offer counter narratives to the dominant discourses of schooling and development that are present in Ladakh. As a genre that is culturally meaningful in the context of Ladakh, it would seem a suitable source to draw on, when considering the form of research texts that I might produce.

So, I offer four fictionalised texts in the style of 'the Divine Madman' as interludes between the poieses. These are my creations, though they follow the style of this book; in a few places, I quote from the original, and have referenced these parts within the text.

I would like to think that if the spirit of Drukpa Kunley could be asked, he would approve of the chaotic irreverence of the pieces that inevitably cut both ways, questioning and wishing to deconstruct as much the seriousness with which research endeavours such as these are taken, as much as the educational discourses that surround schooling in Ladakh.

IIIC WANDERING AROUND THE CORNERS OF A THOUGHT

If research can be considered a form of writing, preceded by a form of knowing, then analysis can be thought of as that which is situated between the two.

Experiencing/responding

The starting point is always a moment of experience.

Fieldnote:

As I enter the year 8 classroom, it was its familiarity that struck me. This small concrete room, perhaps 4m x4m, with its glassless windows, its crooked door, and a few torn science posters hanging from the back wall could be anywhere - such is the shared humanity of the world's poor.

In Buddhism it is called Dharma – the fundamental moment of experience

A dharma is the smallest unit of experience that human beings can have. Dharmas are momentary appearances in our experience, and follow one another in rapid succession.(...) what we think of as I is in fact a continuous stream of constantly changing moments of experience.

(Ray, 2002:369)

I take these moments to be my 'unit of analysis', should there be a need to think of one. In Buddhist terms, there is no other possible unit.

The handful of students in this class slowly stand up, awkwardly from their cross-legged positions. I notice the red carpet covering the floor, I cannot interpret the look in their eyes, chalk dust enters my nose. My heart goes out to these students, struggling away in the alien language of algebra with no teacher to guide them. I feel weighed down by this room.

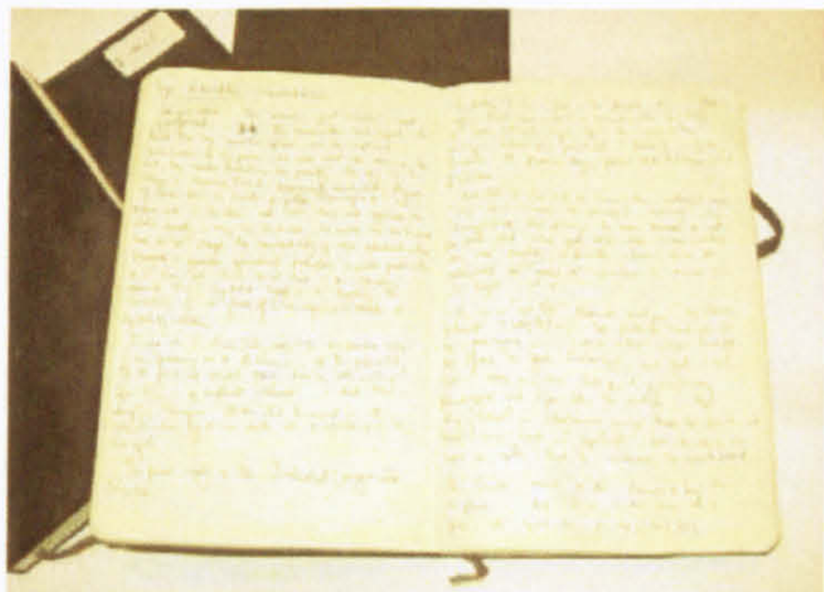
These moments will move outwards soon enough, to connect with others, make links, but for now there is only the moment and my responses.

I think (now in this moment of writing) about Trinh (1989) and her call to the quiet, to the importance of recognising the fragility of ideas. These moments and their responses are beginnings - they are noted, captured, reflected upon, written down in a black book, some transcribed, other rejected.

I must thank everyone who has been involved in the collaborative writing group of the GSoE, University of Bristol. The thought provoking conversations and, not least the sense that it is okay to write differently, has been a rewarding experience. Without this experience, this thesis would be a very different one.

Wandering

I sit, perhaps writing fieldnotes, perhaps, at my computer later, and associate. Following St. Pierre, this is 'nomadic work', free flowing work. Sentences are begun, unsure where their end will be. Possible connections are explored. Photos mapped, compared.



There is a feeling that comes with these writings - the unfolding of the tacit, the feeling that I am not quite sure where I will end up. These writings feel like an analysis.

> *the creative process (...) encourages us to reflect on and connect with tacit knowing, images, hunches, ideas that come between sleeping and waking, intuition, out of body experiences, synchronicity and exceptional human experience.*
>
> *(Etherington, 2004:50).*

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students, boxes
students in boxes, held in, kept in
The cage.
I remember the cage, and shudder.

Supply teaching south london. Poor neighbourhood. I have been warned 'Fire drill at 3.15 – just to let you know. Take them around the back to the playground – They'll know what to do.'
It goes off, they do. We walk, registers are taken. We wait. I find I am strangely like the students here – no role, no place, uncertain as to what is happening.
We are in the playground – the Junior playground. It is small – perhaps 50m x30m, concrete, has 3m high fences all around.

On a low rise 'prefab' over looking this barren 'playground' the headteacher appears. He starts shouting. 'not good enough', 'too slow', 'year 9 terrible', 'year 11, why so much talking.'

Then –
Year 7, too slow, come back here to the cage after school.
What did he say?
'back here in the CAGE at the end of school.
They call this place the cage?
I look around to see surprise on other faces – there is none

This outdoor space with fences so high, you couldn't jump over, door that can be locked, and they call it the cage. Well named.

The image and associations freeze together in that moment – that scene from Schindlers list where Ralph Fiennes standing looking down at the camp with a gun - only in reverse, standing, being overlooked by a ranting man, inside a cage / our bodies controlled.

Juxtaposing

Derrida (2001) makes the point that juxtaposition is a form of deconstruction. In offering new, unlikely connections, it invites us to compare, to expose the taken-for-grantedness of each.

The bricolage exists out of respect for the complexity of the lived world.
(Kincheloe, 2005: 324)

Crapanzano (2004) uses the term montage to describe his own essays that use disjunction,

> *in order to shake the reader out of conceptual complacency or, worse, conventional epistemological anxiety.*
>
> *(Crapanzano, 2004: 3)*

The Ladakhi classroom and the London school are linked – linked first through a feeling of horror, linked through a thought about the ways that schools discipline our bodies – we are first forced in body - to sit cross-legged on the floor of a room for 5 hours a day.

In a sense, all connections are juxtapositions. Things that, placed along side each other, invite comparison, connection. I do not say they are the same, these two experiences, or they are different. I not seek to delimit understandings that can be made – simply express the thought that their juxtaposition tells us something about the experience of schooling.

Writing meditation

In Tibetan Buddhism, there are three levels of wisdom:

> *First - Listening*
> *Second - reflecting*
> *Third - meditating (direct confrontation with the existential situation)*
>
> *(Skiotis, 2005: 8-10)*

'Facts can get in the way of truth. I just speak the truth, the human truth, If you fill up your writing with facts - the where, why, how, what, they can just get in the way, if you go to the truth, then anyone can hear it, they see this, recognise this human truth.'
(Maya Angelou, 2006)

The poieses and the chapters all begin in moments. I begin this thesis with the moment of the grinding mill; begin this chapter meeting the monk. Moments of experience, responded too, associated with other moments, juxtaposed. Moments that lead outwards in ever increasing circles through other experiences, through other ideas.

The 'data' has grown – no longer simply each moment and its response, but now transformed into a rhizome of connected thoughts, linkages, responses, juxtapositions. There are new understandings, but there is mess too. There is need to discrimate the mountains of thoughts and connections. To think through the implications of theory to their end point. To weave these experiences and reflections together to make anew - poiesis.

In Tibetan Buddhism, Boddhistvas are meditated upon to appreciate the truth of existence that their manifestations reveal. I have my own 'gods' – though they are not so enlightened – Foucault, Gramsci, Santos – with ideas that can be applied to data, directing me where to look, rejecting some ideas, suggesting other analytic themes.

But of course theory has been alive throughout – weaving itself in and out of experience – in the framing of research question, in the choice of locations to collect data from (looking for resistances, searching for ripples, tracing the past), in the ways that data itself has been collected (participation, visual methodologies, listening). And so, inevitably my data and my theory are sympathetic by now, at this stage - they understand each other well. Once again, theory and experience meet again.

———

Theory is interwoven, it directs, talks back, counterposes the experiential. In this interweaving of theory, data, photos, reflections the process is attempted to be made visible. These components do not dissolve into each other – they retain their differences.

———

But there is one last goddess that I must mention - Compassion. It is perhaps unsurprising that the understanding of Ladakhi ethics that I gained was based on a reading of compassion – this having such a central place in Tibetan Buddhism.

I have this Thangka of Tara the goddess of Compassion at home where I work. She stares down at me as I write, her gaze a constant reminder to be compassionate in my understandings. There is enough judgement in the world, she says. Understand the world, but do so with compassion.

———

IIID INAPPROPRIATE NARRATIVES

'I shall instead think of the literary as the uncanny, as the haunting and the haunted; as that which resists pinning down, that which will always squirm away and produce 'other', 'unauthorised' meanings; as that which conjures phantoms, which banishes phantoms, and which always leaves us uncertain whether or not we are alone; as intimately connected with hallucination and dreams'
(Punter, 2000: 6-7)

As Young (2003) notes, acts of appropriation begin with acts of translation that acts to open up an indigenous culture in a way that allows appropriation to take place. This is sobering - I am translating indigenous knowledge in Ladakh – into English, into an academic space.

Appropriate, appropriate....
To take something to appropriate it,
To act appropriately

How are these meanings, so different, yet necessarily related to each other? The point of their meeting is found, I feel in the ways that their meanings are naturalised - to 'act appropriately' is to allow oneself to be 'appropriated' by some wider power, and conversely that to appropriate is to make something act appropriately, understandably, in order with our own concerns.

When we appropriate we force some other by the application of our understandings
When we force our understandings on some other, we appropriate by force.

Europeans – they write in one hundred words, what we would write in three
(Ladakhi academic)

The opposite of appropriation, therefore, is not resistance, but inappropriateness.

The poieses and chapters of this thesis then, are critical narratives that seek to express inappropriate understandings in response to the research questions. They seek to counternarrate against the dominant educational and developmental discourses, and so be different, to not act appropriatingly, to offer narratives that are transparent, tentative.

Each poises is in three parts.

A prologue offers a short abstract, detailing the data that has been used in its writing, the main themes explored in the writing and which parts of the theoretical framwork are being emphasised, or particuarlly drawn upon.

The second section is the main narrative – the poiesis itself.

The postscript that follows the narrative offers a discussion of the main findings and their implications.

Each poiesis takes a different data collection experience as its starting point for future 'lines of fight'. These 'chunks' of experience were outlined in chapter III, and represent experiences in Ladakh that were bounded – by geographical location, by methodological approach, by the people who were present.

I could have crafted differently – developed analytic themes and then made each theme a mixture of differently located experiences. I have not – for three reasons. First, I see little need,

as although the poieses begin in these moments, they are not restricted to them. Second, that each poiesis is themed anyway – in that each experience affords a different perspective on the research problem – themes that are 'allowed' by a certain form of knowing, and third, that this would imply that the experience was somehow subordinate to the theme - that experiences were placed 'as examples' of an analytic category. I therefore instead prefer to privilege the experiential as a counter hegemonic strategy, and keep the poieses rooted in a data collection experience.

There are other reasons for keeping the research presentation firmly grounded in the experience of the research encounter. Fabian, in his oft quoted book ***'Time and the other'*** (Fabian, 2002), specifically criticises the way that, in denying the temporality of the research encounter, anthropology 'makes its object'. Fabian explains his thinking with the tem ***Coeval*** – literally 'same time', but used to emphasise the 'shared time' of the research encounter. It is this 'denial of coevalness' that he describes as,

> *a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a time other that the present of the producer of anthropological discourse.*
>
> *(Fabian, 2002: 31)*

that is used to objectify the anthropological 'Other'. Following this line of argument, he explains that,

> *As long as anthropology presents its object primarily as seen, as long as ethnographic knowledge is conceived primarily as observation and/or representation (in terms of models, symbol systems, and so forth) it is likely to persist in denying coevalness to its Other.*
>
> *(Fabian, 2002: 151-152)*

But if each poiesis can be understood as a response, by a set of experiences, to the research questions, then these creations are far from discrete. On the contrary, the nomadic nature of their writings, means that they overlap, interconnect – each a different 'coming to know'.

Research question are no doubt mostly too big or too complex to face directly. The seven poieses therefore, in the sense that I have taken from Kundera and from Deleuze and Guattari, are each a 'partial knowing', partial answers, to the research questions. Each, in its own way, and from a different perspective, from a different emphasis and use of a part of the critical narrative rhizome, offers one possible response to the research questions.

I could claim that they triangulate. In a sense they do – but they also critique, comment upon each other. As a set of poieses, they seek to do at a macro level, what each poiesis seeks to do at a micro level – to juxtapose, to make us aware of the limitations of, the boundaries of the research knowledge that has been created.

At this macro level juxtaposition of the seven poieses – each one a different types of knowledge production - lies a different way to consider how the research, taken as a whole, responds to the research questions.

The question of which theoretical ideas might best offer counter hegemonic knowledge, is something that can only come from interrogating, at this macro level, the different forms of research knowledge that have been produced. In the final chapter, where we are able to look back and see what forms of knowledge have been able to be developed through which experiences and which theories has been taken as a space to attempt to answer this question.

These then, are the craftlines and craft-process of the weaving of the chapters and poieses in this thesis. The rest of the poieses are now left to be read, with no further interruption.

———

HOW DRUKPA KUNLEY THE MASTER OF TRUTH WENT TO SCHOOL

We bow at the feet of Kunga Legpa, the great adept
Who through the karma of his impartial, spontaneous, ascetic activity,
Revealed strange miracles and truth
Precisely in accord with his every intention
(Dowman (trans), 2000: 74)

Kunga Legpa was passing through a village when he saw an old lady in a field. *'Old lady, you will have magnificent barley if you tend to your field like you tend to your children, tell me, are there any knowledgeable people in this village?*

We have a school down below, she replied.

So Kunga Legpa, hiding his real identity went down to the school and met with the headteacher. *'Oh wise one, master of truth, I am a poor acolyte from across the mountains. I have heard that your lore is great. May I come and learn at your feet.'*

'Go away, old man. Can't you see that this is place for children', the headteacher replied, *'there is no place for you here'.*

'But I am like a child, next to your own great self. Let me stay!', Drukpa Kunley said, bowing low before him.

The headteacher looked troubled, but could not very well turn away this old man. Finally he said *'very well, but you will need a uniform. Come back tomorrow, dressed properly'.*

The next day Drukpa Kunley returned dressed from head to feet in a sheep fur. *'What are you doing here like this, I said to*

come in uniform', the headteacher said angrily, waving his stick in the air.

'But I came in uniform. I saw that the children here are flocking from place to place, so I came as a sheep.

The children in class were singing songs. ***'Do you know any children's songs?'*** The headteacher asked Drukpa Kunley? He was sure that the old man would feel foolish and go away.

'I know the song of the ten steps to the perfect realisation of the ultimate emptiness of existence. Let me sing it for you,

In step one you learn not to pee in your pants for one hour at a time
In step two you learn the art of staying for the whole day in a small box without talking.
In step three your learn how to sit cross legged on the floor.
In step four you learn that if you carry a pile of books between home and school you become strong
In step five you learn that if you cook for the teachers you will pass automatically to the sixth step
In step six you become master of the chalkboard duster
In step seven you learn the art of copying things you do not understand from one paper to another
In step eight you learn how to remember things you do not understand so you can copy them directly onto a paper.
In step nine you learn the illusory nature of true knowledge
In step ten, you have realised the full meaning of emptiness and become enlightened, and get a certificate to show to everyone else just how empty your head is.

At this Drukpa Kunley, got up and went on his way, laughing.

FOURTH POIESIS

DISPLACED KNOWLEDGE

Poiesis Outline

Prologue
Displaced knowledge
Suffering / illusion
Nullification
Dislocation / rupture
Code / logic / competition
Tension / paradox
Postscript

Displaced knowledge

PROLOGUE

This poiesis is a response to a week collecting data in the Junior High School in Saboo. Most of this time was spent teaching algebra to the 11 students of class VIII, whose openness, enthusiasm and generosity made this week a special, if not altogether optimistic time.

In the previous poiesis I analysed the ways that indigenous knowledge was in danger of being lost in transmission through the different articulations of a development discourse of which schooling was seen to be a key component. This poiesis understands the school to be both a key site to understand these processes, but perhaps more importantly, a key mechanism for the creation of ruptures in patterns of social life and livelihood.

In analysing the role that schooling plays, I characterise the school as a place of suffering. Caught on the losing side of a competition with private schools, the poor state of the schooling offered is understood both as a consequence of the haemorrhaging of pupils to the private sector and a cause of it.

From this standpoint, I go onto analyse the school practice in terms of the ways that it functions hegemonically to indigenous knowledge, characterising it as a place of nullification, dislocation, codification and paradox.

DISPLACED KNOWLEDGE

The foreign school is the new form of war which those who have come here are waging. The new school shares at the same time the characteristics of cannon and magnet. From the cannon it draw its efficacy as an arm of combat. Better than the cannon it makes conquest permanent. The cannon compels the body, the school bewitches the soul. Where the cannon has made a pit of ashes and of death, in the sticky mold of which men would not have rebounded from the ruins, the new school establishes peace. The morning of rebirth will be a morning of benediction through the appeasing virtue of the new school.

(Kane, in Ki Zerbo et al, 2004: 155)

Suffering /illusion

I could fill this thesis with sadness.

The headteacher of a school in Zimbabwe, slowly takes off his shoe and hits every child in the class over the head with it, for making noise, let me rephrase – for making **their** noise (50 kids in a classroom no teacher) rather than **his** noise – the awful sound of shoe on head.

The same school, a 15 year old girl, binding her stomach so tightly to hide her pregnancy for fear that she would be kicked out of school gives birth suddenly one Easter holiday. It had worked – we did not suspect anything - until gossip eventually finds its way back - she is kicked out anyway. The baby, I think was okay.

Saboo Junior High school, Ladakh. A girl, maybe 12 years old, sits alone in a concrete cell, measuring a few metres across. It is winter, but there is no glass in the windows. She sits there, all day from morning to evening, alone. Occasionally a teacher will walk in sit with her for some time, and go out again. She is a shy pupil, sits obediently.

Dave: Why does she have to sit alone?
Teacher: She is the only girl in class seven
D: So why not bring her in with class eight?
T. Because they do different exams
D: Are the class seven exams internal or external
T: Only internal
D: So you could give her own work, and just test that at the end of the year – you could test her on anything
T: But she has to do class seven work
D: Ok, then why can't she sit in with class eight when she is not being taught by anyone – just for company
T: No that won't be possible

It is understood that this is not good, but she stays where she is.

It's not only prisoners who are treated like children, the children who are treated like prisoners. Children are subjected to an infantilisation which is not their own. In any sense, schools are a little like prisons, and factories are very much like them,(…); you need three vouchers to go make pee-pee during the day.

(Deleuze, 2004: 209)

Angmo: In fact it is not good for her like that. She is a shy girl. This sitting alone all day is making her shy.'

We know this suffering, yet it is difficult to see, difficult to talk of. We silence this, under narratives of hope, possibility, improvement, development, success.

Fieldnote:
There is a different atmosphere afoot today. The headteacher has finally arrived. Teachers are calling names at registration, called to take out some books to get checked. I half expected it, but it is still a shock when students are beaten, some only 4/5 years old. First on the back, slaps around the head ears pulled – both those that have done the homework and those that have not, it seems. I move amongst the students, look at their work, give encouraging noises hoping that the intervention of my presence will be enough to stop this. It doesn't of course, and I choose not to intervene further. In the staffroom, I ask one of the teachers, Angmo, 'why do people beat? 'I don't beat, When I first came I told people not to, but it is their choice.'

In searching for ways of thinking of the place of the subjectivity of the researcher in the research process, I found resonance with Riessman's (2002) conceptualisations as centred around ideas of witness and justice. For Riessman, justice means that,

> ***When we enter the lives of others and write about them, we become witnesses. Sometimes what we see is wrenching, provoking emotions nearly impossible to bear. Doing justice means that we cannot look away.***
>
> ***(Riessman, 2002: 194)***

No doubt a sentiment that is more acute in her own work on narratives of illness, that my own, and yet, the point remains.

Angmo is a wonderful presence in the school. I have much to thank her for in her help with the students in her translating of their comments during the focus group sessions, and not least for her care of the students that gave an otherwise very sad week, a ray of hope.

I choose not to focus upon the dream, the illusion of school success, but to try to see through it to the lived realities of the experiences of these students. There is a double connection here – both to Gramsci and his call to understand the lived realities of people as the basis for any counter hegemonic move, and also to Buddhism, whose call to 'see things as they are', acknowledges that it is often our grasping of the illusions that we live by that separates us from our agency.

This school is on the margins, not a thriving school. I know this. It is a government school for one thing. Its closeness to Leh means that most of the parents who can afford to do so send their child to private schools in Leh.

I am advised by a member of SECMOL, the NGO who is involved in curriculum reform that I should look at another school, that Saboo is unrepresentative place to study

> ***DB: I am going to be in Saboo for the next month and then (interrupted)***
> ***BN: You don't want to go to Saboo. You are interested in education aren't you? Saboo has several school closed down. You should go somewhere to see a school functioning well in the country (...) In Saboo you only find the children of migrant workers, no Ladakhis.***

A joke

'I hate school
It can't be that bad
I don't want to go to school!
Now come on, you know you have to go to school
I won't go
But you have to go -
you're the head teacher!'

This is only partly correct of course; it takes the children of the poor who cannot afford to go to private school – Nepali workers, yes, but some Saboo children too, and others. Of the 11 students in class eight that I mostly teach there are four Nepali, three children from Saboo and four Ladakhis from other parts of Ladakh - one from Chilling, one from Zanskar, one from Nubra, one from Diskit. These last stay with families in the village, work for them in the evenings in return for a place to stay, think that this school, in its proximity to Leh is better than the one in their own village.

I say 11 students – that was the number at the start of the week. By the end of the week there were only nine. This school is haemorrhaging – it used to be a High School up to class X – not only a Junior High school to class VIII. For families with money this school can't compete with the private schools in Leh, their school buses and 'serious' attitude.

I visit a family in the village, eat with them one evening. The student/worker is teased endlessly, I am told she is stupid, that she is lazy, I do not understand what it is that makes her stay here, when she could stay at home, go to her local school. Why to spend years being told you are a failure?

I am interested in how young people feel about indigenous knowledge, but must talk with students. This is a conflation, but an unavoidable one, here is Saboo, at least. These students have praxis here – they are both subject to the school system whose effects on them and their engagement with the knowledge habitat of Saboo village I am interested in, but are also partly constitutive of this same system.

We are having one of our afternoon chats. I give two of them the Polaroid camera one day; the next day after school we sit and discuss the pictures as a group. The students can understand English quite well, but most are uncomfortable speaking. Angmo, knows these students, but is also from Saboo herself, adds her own comments at times. The conversation flows easily.

I enjoy these chats – there is a equality here somehow. Perhaps this is naïve - there is at least a space for respect. The conversations bring home knowledge into this school space; during the day I teach them maths and after class they teach me about their village.

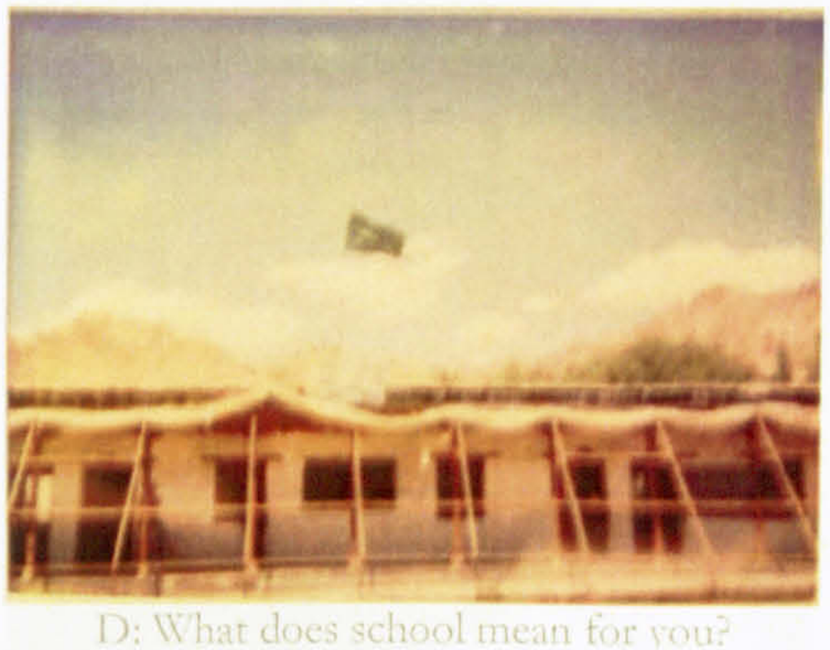
One student has taken a picture of the school, and so we talk about the school and what it means to them. They are class eight, must leave Saboo at the end of the year go elsewhere. On the side here is part of the conversation, together with the picture of the school (their classroom leftmost), as taken by one of the students.

Fieldnote:

The weight of this place – the weight of the hope/ tragedy. I feel like the sole member of audience in a bizarre pantomime – 'look out it's behind you'. The feeling not even dispelled by the cheerful students.

Reading my fieldnotes, I feel ashamed at this thought – as if it is I, in questioning the value of their experiences are somehow betraying their hopes – who am I to question these dreams of becoming doctors, teachers?

I teach them Maths. They have had no proper maths teacher for one and a half years. The teacher supposed to teach maths is a science teacher who can't or won't teach them.



D: What does school mean for you?
St: It is important to get information, education. School is like a temple. We learn some habits, we learn good discipline and good behaviour.
D: Do you like to come to school
St: Yes
D: Why?
St: School is important. We are learning so many things. At home there is not much we are learning. Just sitting. We are bored. At home we only learn working activities, we do not learn books. In school we learn books.

D: What is your hope for education?
St: If we get education, we progress the village.
D: So you want to stay in village?
St: Yes, stay in village and make it better
D:: What would you like to be?
St: A teacher
St: A doctor

D: What school you like to go to next year, you can't stay in Saboo
St: Girls higher secondary school
St: Boys higher secondary school
D: You like going Leh
St: I don't like to go
D: Why not?
St: I don't like bus
D: Would you like high school is Saboo?
St:: Yes

D: What about other school – like the Rigzung school, maybe they are private, expensive
St: (quiet)
Angmo: Expensive they don't like to go to private school, in fact they like to go government school

Fieldnote:

I wish to draw a picture of an emotional world of suffering, and yet, I must draw back from emotionality. I need to find a compassionate reading, in a Buddhist sense of compassion without pity, I find this difficult.

So I teach them Maths, knowing that they have no hope of passing their Maths exam that is coming up in a few weeks time. I am ashamed at this too – ashamed that I am complicit in this illusion. I want to say ***'you know you have no chance here'***, but cannot do this.

———

I am asked to teach topic T2 of class VIII. I am told ***'they have test soon'***. I become confused, indignant. ***'I cannot teach them T2 - Division of algebraic equations before they have studied T1 - introduction to algebraic equations'. 'Just go through and give them some notes'***, the teacher says. I consider walking away from this problem – give her back the responsibility.

———

Nullification

> *All that is not recognised or legitimated by this canon is declared nonexistant. Nonexistance appears in this case in the form of ignorance (..)*
>
> *(Santos, 2004: 15)*

———

'The old days described by Julius Nyerere, when 'every adult was a teacher', was over. Now, only those certified by the school system, according to its self devised criteria had the right to teach? And only those whose abilities were recognised by the latter could be admitted to learn.
(Rahnema, in Ki Zerbo et al, 1997: 158)

Ignorance - that which we ignore. Ignorance and knowledge, each implicating the other, defined by what - textbooks, schools, institutions, governments, academia?

———

But there is a feeling that this is not all, that there is a deeper critique of ignorancing possible here - others layers.

———

> *The opposite of knowledge is ignorance*
> *The opposite of learning is therefore not ignorance, but nullification*

———

Nullification – the active construction of 'noknowledge'

———

I wish to describe 'noknowledge' not as a lack of knowledge, but as an active construction – that 'noknowledge' is an object too. I do not mean this in Santos' sense of a constructed silence - but more concretely that here, that students learn 'noknowledge' – knowledge that is meaningless, unknowable to them, learnt yes, remembered perhaps for a short time, but understood, no.

I mean noknowledge in the same way that Kundera writes about nonthought,

> *NONTHOUGHT. This cannot be translated by "absence of thought.". Absence of thought indicates a nonreality, the disappearance of reality. We cannot say that an absence is aggressive, or that it is spreading. "nonthought", on the other hand, describes a reality, a force (...)*
>
> *(Kundera, 1992: 142)*

———

A friend, Maths teacher, teaching in Saudia Arabia tells the story of a student learning French through the medium of English. This child, with Arabic as his first language was revising for a test the next day, translating words between English and French. The point of the story? – although the child knew these words in two languages, for many of them, he had no idea what they meant in either!

D: People are using this hand pump for the whole village?
St: Some, most, others are there
D: The canal water is not clean for drinking?
St: No
D: Why
St: Dirty water, you would not like to use, there are germs and dirt
D: How does the water get dirty
St: People make the water dirty, washing clothes, washing car, they throw rubbish
D: Before pump what did people do?
St: That time we use canal water, it was clean, so that the people did not make the water dirty. The people had no vehicles; they were taking bucket of water for washing.
D: So is hand pump progress or not
St: Water has become dirty year by year then hand pump is good. But, in fact people should give importance to keep the canal clean.
D: Why?
St: The pump is not available for everyone.

The week I am in the school, the years twos have no teacher. Let us be more precise – I do not remember any teacher being present, have no record of it in my fieldnotes. I remember everyday going past their classroom on the way in and out of school lunchtimes, break times – they are sitting chatting, cross-legged on the floor. Some pretend to read – it is like a comedy sketch, with their textbooks often upside down. Sometimes I go in just to not ignore them. They stand up, expectantly. I say Juley, They said 'good morning' - that is the limit of our communication.

I am outside one morning sitting talking with a teacher. A year four students come along to ask a question from the textbook about photosynthesis. She is not able to answer, not able to decipher the textbook sufficiently for it to become meaningful. I must remember to be compassionate here. It is not her fault, she is simply a product of years of rote learning herself. There is a bigger tragedy - that this year four student is expected to be able to do this. And a little more noknowledge is learnt, a little more 'white noise'.

One of Nepali year VIII girls is teaching me to play 'stones'. We talk about the textbook – rather, I am moaning to her about textbooks – hoping to get her sense of how she finds them.

> ***The textbooks are so bad, I don't know how anyone can read them'***, I say, ***'Don't give yourself tension'***, she replies laughing.

Perhaps this is the way she has learnt to cope with it?

Education is positive. How can it be otherwise? How can learning be anything but good. Education is one of those expressions that has suppressed its shadow into silence - it manages a singularity – education good, no education silence. Since, during this week I am immersed in school algebra, we might express it as,

$$School + teachers + students \geq 0$$

But the graph does not start from zero – there is a whole side of the graph unexplored – the world of negative numbers that are ignored, able to be ignored only because we silence that there is any knowledge outside of schooling. If the world outside of schooling has no knowledge, exists as a knowledge desert, then all schools, however bad, are better than no schools, right?

From their own experience, children would come to distinguish between different strains of barley and the specific growing conditions each strain preferred. The learned to recognise even the tiniest wild plant and how to use it, and how to pick out a particular animal on a faraway mountain slope. (...) none of that knowledge is provided in the modern school.

(Norberg - Hodge, 2000: 110-111)

This is where the mathematical analogy breaks down because it is not a matter of finding the conditions whereby

School + teachers + students ≥ IK + practitioners

As if they were independent trajectories of learning. Rather there is a very real relationality here, as Kane, quotes the chief of the Diallobe tribe in Senegal as eloquently expressing the impact of schools on his community,

But learning, they would also forget. Would what they learn be worth as much as they would forget? I should like to ask you? Can one learn this, without forgetting that (...)?

(Kane, in Ki Zerbo et al, 2004: 156)

'It would be a tragedy if the widespread diffusion of this type of valueless pedagogy should result – as it has in the plains – in the creation of a semi educated proletariat whose skills barely extend beyond basic literacy, and who (are) divorced from their cultural roots.'

(Rizvi, 1983: 109)

Dislocation/rupture

If indigenous knowledge is being lost in Transmission, then perhaps schooling is primarily implicated in this process by the dislocation that it creates.

People want a good school. It is not a question of money. It is competition. If they see their neighbour sending their children to private school they think why shouldn't I send my child too.

(Chair, Village Education Committee, Saboo)

Gyatso referred to this process of learning knowledge within the family as 'lineage', and was true for all of the indigenous knowledge practices that I encountered.

The dislocation that this desire for a good school creates (whether understood to be a response to a dominant discourse, or whether, as we saw in the third poiesis many of my interviewees thought, a product of a new competitiveness) takes children away from their family units - these family units being the main site for the transmission of indigenous knowledge.

One only has to look at the class VIII class list. Putting aside the Nepali students, children of migrant workers (which would be another research), there are only four Saboo students of this age still going to day school in the village. For sure, most of the others similar aged Saboo students are day scholars in Leh, but, as one parent told me, they must get the bus as early as 7am, get back late, often around 6pm. For most students there is a dislocation, the size of which is dependent upon economic status – for the poor, they are dislocated from far off villages to work in homes nearer to the city, or in Leh, if they can. For the slightly wealthier, there is a dislocation to private schools in Leh, or regional private schools in Dharamsala, for the wealthier still, there is dislocation to schools in Delhi, Chandigarrh. The dislocation was most obvious, and expressed by the last category - here is Phuntshok, the college graduate,

Dave: I am interested in the ways that education has affected things such as blacksmithing, Amchi,
Phuntshok: In fact, I do not know anything about these things, I have been to school outside only coming for one two months.

I go with Gyatso, himself a student from Delhi to do some work in the fields, have a go at watering them.

Dave: Do you do this work for your family?
Gyatso: In fact I have never done.

Or with another college student from outside Saboo that I met,

'Up to class X, I was not really knowing anything about Buddhism, I studied with Christians, Muslims, Hindus, so I don't really know. It was only after I came back to Ladakh, that I started to realise what Buddhism is saying'

But one should not underestimate the changes that dislocation around Ladakh creates. Whether going to private school in Leh or government school with their hostel, students are still removed from their home environments

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There are giggles as I pass two young school children, maybe six, seven years old in the street in Leh,

Where are you from?
I am from England, Where are you from?'
I am from Zanskar
Why are you in Leh?
To go to school
There are no schools is Zanskar?
There are no good schools in Zanskar
Where are you from?
Lamayuru,
Why are you in Leh?
To go to school
There are no schools in Lamayuru?
No good schools in Lamayuru

I am talking with a young European guy I meet in a restaurant, he is here making a film about the pashmina industry and has been out with the nomads of Changtang, far off to the East of Ladakh. I tell him why I am there, he tells me of his experiences,

The Nomads in Changtang all asked for sponsorship to go to school in Leh. The Tibetan Nomads can't get jobs, because they are refugees. The Ladakhi Nomads still can. They have a tough life so they want better for their kids. There was this child, last year she had big black hair in nomad gear, and now she is with short hair in uniform at the TVC school.

(Coleman, private conversation, 2005)

The question of place is of course, deeply relevant for issues of indigenous knowledge. Conceptually, indigenous knowledge practices operate in context – they are 'practiced' in environmental contexts – located in landscape, in a knowledge habitat - one must be in the fields to know how to water them, be in the Rantok, to know how to use it, repair it.

St: This is a special Rantok. It uses water and electricity
D: Who is using?
St: farmers
D: Just for this farmer?
St: Everyone can use?
D: They have to pay?
St: Yes, but not much, one tin flour, RS10 like that, but big tin, not expensive
D: Everyone is coming here, or some are going other places for grinding?
St: Some are taking to Leh, some are getting the machine from Leh

St: Maybe few families are using this one.
D: Why don't they use this one?
St: The machine is faster
D: Which one is good the new old one or the old one?
St: 'old is golden'
D: Why is the old one good?
St: Because the old people did it, it is a good thing
D: Young people are knowing how to do?
St: We can copy the old one
D: Anyone is making
St: I promise I will build one

St: If we use this one, they will charge, not money but maybe a tin of flour, It is the ancient custom of the people, it is not a fixed price, just as you like, how much you want to give, if you have few bags you give accordingly

We met this locatedness in the third poiesis – below a mountain pass near chilling where the metalworking knowledge is located. Here is a list of some of the different craftskills of Ladakh and their geographical location, as given in a Ladakh Hill Council report.

Craft	Location	Revival
Pottery	Likir	• Mechanise to some extent to reduce cost and time for production • Logistical support such as transportation of finished goods, availability of raw materials, marketing, etc.
Metal Crafts	Chiling-Sumda, Markha	• Mechanization to some extent • Logistical help • Effective marketing
Chali Making	All over Ladakh	• Adaptation of reuse for tourist purposes, hotel industry. Schools etc. • Logistical help and marketing
Thik-ma	Nubra	• Expand usage for dresses, shoes, belts, bags etc
Arga making	All over Ladakh	• Technological revival for conservation works
Herbal/Mineral dyes	Ladakh	• Use for thangkas, murals • Stone dyes prepared and marketed from Markha valley • Logistical help
Doltok (stone cookers)	Nubra, Turtuk	• Logistical help for revival
Lime	Hanle, Skitmang, Wakha	• Logistical support for packaging, transportation etc. • Use in Hanle monastery for restoration and at other monasteries as well
Pashmina	Changthang	• Adaptive reuse other than shawls
Ladakhi medicenes	Ladakh	• Patenting the process and product • Marketing and logistical assistance

(Leh Autonomous Development Hill Council et al, 2001)

There is an analysis here – it is not the only possible one – that dislocation, that displacement, is associated with colonialism, with power – from the dislocation of European bodies to the colonies, from the displacement of indigenous people from their lands – movement/power.

I think about my time in Bhutan from the perspective of bodily flows. A few of us westerners flow into Bhutan, bringing out western knowledge, but there is a much bigger flow – of Indian teachers who have had western education for longer. We can trace the hegemony of western knowledge in the flow of bodies across the globe.

I am told by the Deputy Chief Education officer for Ladakh that there is a rule that private schools should not be sited within 1km of government schools, to reduce the competition. I have seen many that have not followed this rule, but let that pass – only 1km? How can this make a level playing field?

I am in the village of Hemis. It is a beautiful location up in a side valley off the Indus. Its monastery famous. There is no longer any school in Hemis. The Indian army, camped at the river Indus half an hour drive below opened an Army school. Students started coming down for it. Soon the army sent a school bus to make the journey of the students easier – numbers in the village school went down and down, closed the year before I was there.

This is the new private school at Thiksey. The village is off to the right – the photo take from the monastery on the hill above.

It is curious, the phrase - school as a place of learning – schools are not of a landscape, they are placed into a landscape, their separateness symbolised by their expression of boundary. The walls bound an empty space – mere desert, like all around it – the year seven girl finds herself bounded in her lonely room.

Code / logic /competition

It is ironic, I suppose – I end up teaching maths – algebra. Of all the things taught here in this school. Of all subjects, and of all topics, algebra is perhaps the most abstracted, least useful. Or maybe not so unlikely that this most alien of subjects is least likely to find a Ladakhi teacher to teach it.

I understand a little of the role of the textbook in school logic. Bhutan, which followed an Indian exam system up to year VIII, was textbook focused. When I first arrived to Khaling to teach, I asked for a copy of the syllabus – ***'There is none'***, I was told, ***'we follow the textbook'***.

I come to hate this expression - Following the textbook.
The textbook as bible. It leads us and we all follow
When I start teaching in Bhutan, I dutifully 'follow the textbook' - just not in the same order – taking one topic from half way through, another from near the beginning - because this is more logical, I feel. The students complain to the Headteacher that I am not doing what I am supposed to do – I am not following the textbook.

'Those who had shown fight and those who had surrendered, those who had come to terms and those who were obstinate – they all found themselves, when the day came, checked by census, divided up, classified, labelled, conscripted, administered.
(Kane, in Ki-Zerbo et al, 2004: 155)

Stanzin, Nawang Tsering's daughter is also a teacher, doing a correspondence MEd through a University in the state. She asks me about the English education system, because she has been studying it in her course material.

> *Stanzin: It says that England has 'O' levels, and that it has technical modern schools, is that correct?*
> *Dave: It used to be, but it hasn't been like that for a long time.*
> *Stanzin: But that's what I must write in the exam or I will fail.*

This problem is not new. Francke, whom we have met before, writes, in 1898,

> *I decided to teach them (English) by using the Children's song Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep, intending to widen their knowledge of the vocabulary and grammatical rules. By such playful means, I hope to make them into little Englishmen.*
> *(Francke, 1898/2005: 286)*

Perhaps we should be happy that his new pedagogy was not successful, but he goes on to explain the reason for his lack of success thus,

> *There is one edition of an English reader in use in the whole of India, starting with a primer and going up to Book 8. A learner's prowess in English is judged great or small according to how many or how few of these books he has mastered. If a method of learning English other than this universally known series of book is used, then the normal means of measuring knowledge is missing and all efforts are considered useless.*
> *(Francke, 1898/2005: 286)*

Perhaps it is a difference in scale. I find the idea that a country of more than a billion people has such imposed universality, uncomfortable.

There is a connection here, somewhere, to a story I was told about folk songs, told indeed twice by two different people, that went something like,

> *Before, everyone knew the traditional songs, and each village would have a slightly different version of it, each village thinking that theirs was the only one, the right one. Now, one day, one of these songs got popular, got on the radio, now people don't sing anymore – they have learnt that their village's version of the song is the wrong one.*

Presumably somewhere in Ladakh, there is one village that is still singing happily.

Take care, be cautious, who can predict the consequences of what we do!
Codification.
We write knowledge in textbooks
Codification
Knowledge that is not in people, but taken out of its habitat, written down, pinned down, in its concreteness made certain.

Raffles is right to point out that western scientific knowledge it dominant because it ***'succeeds more effectively in its translocal articulation' (Raffles, 2002: 327).*** It is the codification of this knowledge that allows is implicated in this process.

Let us dwell a moment on the textbook – in this codified, storable, transferable, portable, dis-embodied knowledge tool. Here, at this point indigenous knowledge begins to loose the battle. And the weight of that battle can be felt. The code is there. The textbook must be followed – there is no option for the students nor for I.

I am in good spirits as I begin to teach this week. I have met people, engaged in a world of indigenous knowledge that although in decline, although riven by tensions, is alive with alterity.

I am not prepared for the weight of the school as it descends upon me. My fieldnotes from this week are full of sighs - the sighs of resignation. I feel the weight of the inevitability of this institution.

Of all the forms of white noise that schools here teach, perhaps algebra is the whitest, but I am sucked in - I cannot help myself. The maths is not my focus, but the students are there – they sit, they will have an exam, they will either pass it or fail it. Surely, it is better if these students pass it than fail it.

So, I teach them. I wish them to learn this, learn enough in this week to pass, perhaps. I am ashamed that the students think I have given them something by teaching them this.

> ***Fieldnote:***
> ***The class goes brilliantly today, such good students – from what is algebra to factorisation of quadratics in three hours***

The students are great – hardworking, cheerful, polite but not shy – they express their personalities and individualities. I know they will fail their maths – but this is not because they cannot pass. In an English school these students would be top set – here they will fail for want of a maths teacher.

This experience is saddening, but I know it is important. This is one of the articulations of the hegemony of western knowledge - trapped inside the logic of its code.

I understand; who would want this for their child? But in suffering in schools like this, in the cycle of suffering that is thereby reproduced by the very desire to reduce it by attending a 'good' school, indigenous knowledge is overlooked, passed over. It has no place here.

Tension /paradox

You have see this photo before – it was used to illustrate the ingenuity of the indigenous knowledge that has allowed these fields to be created out of the desert. But look more closely, and you will see that most of these fields lie empty – unplanted, left to grass.

If you go to Sumda Chenmo, it is a big village, but you will see most of the fields lie empty, there is no-one to look after them.
(Tsering, personal conversation, 2005)

Not only in far off Sumda Chenmo, that can only be walked to - here in Saboo too.

There is a meeting I am invited to. It is part of women farmer project, Swiss funded, taking a few women farmers from Swiss farms to Ladakh and vice versa.

We are having a problem here in Saboo. The young people they do not want to know farming.
(Saboo woman farmer, 2005)

The interviews that formed the basis of the second poiesis were full of such tensions.

The agency of students in this process is unclear to me. The parents discourse is that, *'it is their choice, it is up to them'* while for the students, *'parents would not allow to stay at home'.* Perhaps each experiences the agency of the other here, perhaps each feels the sense that there is something unavoidable about the choices that are available to them.

I am talking with an 'A' level student at another college. She is telling me that what she learns is not useful to her in any way,

DB: So why do you study, if what you learn is not useful?
St: We are freedomless, is that how you say it?
D: You have no choice?
St: Yes we have no choice, it is something like social pressure. You have to do it.

So while both parents and children feel the tensions that the schooling creates, there is one key difference - the parents feel the tensions, the children must live them.

———

We are talking about what form of work makes you happy. The words on the side here are part of this conversation. I cannot easily transcribe the silences that were perhaps the most eloquent, silences within which I feel that perhaps an ethical border has been crossed. I do not know. Perhaps this is a challenge that they will appreciate later, perhaps I brought them sadness, perhaps I have simply misinterpreted this moment.

———

My heart goes out to these students, to the worlds that they must live, to the decisions that they must make. Clearly these students are not as worried about the future as I am, or perhaps they are. I wouldn't know, It is not acceptable to discuss emotions in Ladakh, and I shall not get further here. I am honoured to have been met with such openness and honesty. It is only my own ability to hear more that limits my understanding.

———

But, in the end, I prefer the idea of a paradox to a tension – there are paradoxes here. Tensions tear apart, while paradoxes are opportunities to change. There are paradoxes – that modern life is seen as easier but busier – that it is easier but not as satisfying, that schooling is the reason why pupils are badly behaved and the solution to the bad behaviour, that office work won't make you happier but it is better.

———

I am talking with Hughie about suffering,

> ***People always do what they think will reduce their suffering', he says. 'But all transformation is difficult, the question is do you want the suffering that leads to more suffering or the suffering that leads to less suffering***

———

These tensions must be lived out, people go to school, work at school because they think it will make their lives easier. Perhaps it will, but this is one paradox that must be played out.

———

There is a happiness and sadness at the end of the week. We have got close, these students and I. I am offered a Katag, a ceremonial scarf that is gifted on departure. I would not wish these children to have to live out such paradoxes. I am honoured to meet them.

If Jackson is right, and the point of fieldwork, of any such encounter come to think of it, is where '***the self and other are constituted in mutuality and acceptance rather than violence and contempt' (Jackson, 1998, 208)*** then perhaps it is here, in getting a glimpse into the world of others through their part in that which is co-constructed between us in our encounter – the impression of the hands of others on the moment that have been created, where it can be felt.

———

D: Who do you think is happy, people doing office work or people doing
St: fieldwork
St: These ones, they look happy in fieldwork
D: So what type of work you want to do?
St: Office work
St: both are good
D: It's difficult to do both
St: Sundays we can do
D: But see around Ladakh, often the fields are empty
St: there is no-one to do the fieldwork, maybe
D: You say these people look happy, why do people want office job
St: Only in season to do fieldwork
D: There is good money, there is holiday in winter
St: But there is a shortage of money

D: Do you know anyone who is not going to school, who doesn't want school, who wants just to do fieldwork
St: No not this time
D: So people don't like to do happy work
St: The parents would not accept. The parents feel that education is important. The parents would not allow to stay at home.

Fieldnote:
This afternoon was about gifts – the students feel that my teaching was a gift – I that their learning was one. I do not feel I gave much – a basic understanding of maths, useless maths at that, a few shuttlecocks, a few photos – a chance to see that maths can be okay - but perhaps this is not what happened - when they work they do not gift of their brains, their time - they gift of their trust, their openness, their selves.

POSTSCRIPT

Ki Zerbo evocatively describes students of the colonial school as victims of Zombification:

'whose soul and spirit have been stolen from him, leaving him just his body and his labour powers'

Ki Zerbo, in Ki Zerbo et al, 1997: 154)

I have characterised the school as being a site not only for the creation of ruptures in patterns of social life, but more, as a lived reality, students must live out these tensions, try not to fall into these ruptures. The students are trapped within the logic of a particular form of code that they have no resources to escape from, and so, school becomes a site of suffering, where they are subjected to a process of nullification, the active creation of noknowledge.

These processes are seen to trap students to suffer in a western school system that simply has no possibility of engagement with indigenous knowledge. Through its dislocatory practices, indigenous knowledge is lost in transmission, through its process of nullification, the possibility of indigenous knowledge being learnt is limited, through its portable code, indigenous knowledge, in its embodiedness, locatedness, simply cannot compete.

Crapanzano (2004) in an essay on hope, quotes Minkowski as writing,

> *We are charmed by hope, because it opens the future broadly before us'*
>
> *(Minkowski, in Crapanzano, 2004: 103)*

I am taken with this discussion on hope: it offers a softer encounter with a psychological that I have been cautious to engage in.

We can understand the hegemony of western education sociologically, historically, discursively, narratively, and I have drawn upon these different approaches, and yet we are left with a space where the self responds.

Responds with hope? Responds with hopelessness?

There is a point that niggles away at me. Why do students put up with such suffering? Yet, I am cautious of incursions into the psychological in social science, unsure that we might ever be able to get to know enough in our ethnographies to make claims to know, beyond what people themselves express, even the slightest part of what motivates another. It is no coincidence that I draw upon Deleuze and Guattari, with their rejection of an interiority or upon Kundera and the absence of internal voices in his novels. I do not wish to open new spaces to know the other.

But hope, is not desire. As Crapanzano notes

> *while desire presumes a psychology, hope presupposes a metaphysics. Both require an ethics – of expectation, constraint, and resignation.*
>
> *(Crapanzano, 2004: 100)*

While desire presupposes human agency, hope is desire's passive counterpart, depends on some other for its agency. It is apt. Educational success cannot be desired here, these students do not have sufficient agency for that. The possibility of these students educationally achieving is not in their hands, the have no money to go to a better school, have no teacher to teach them. The agency that they posses to study is insufficient alone, there is a resignation. Here, in this poor school, hope is all that is possible.

Who can live with hopelessness? Hope is surely an understandable response to a situation where we cannot escape from, have little agency in.

Crapanzano considers hope a neglected concept, discusses it because

> ***'power - articulatory power – operates most forcefully through (the institutionalized authority of) our meta-languages.'***
>
> ***(Crapanzano, 2004: 98-99).***

I agree, feel that these abstracted concepts have value. His interest in hope is as part of the elucidation of the concept of an 'imaginative horizon', searching to understand the role of that which we are able to imagine in creating our experience, and in many ways therefore emphasises the productive nature of hope.

It is not that I do not concur; it is rather, that I would wish to be critical, deconstructive, seek to reconfigure the role of hope. If a cycle of suffering is created through code, logic, nullification, then this hegemony is maintained through hope.

Neglect?
Hope?

In other poieses I have characterised the hegemony of western knowledge as being less one of active destruction than simple neglect. That as the modern world becomes busier, as we are too careless to recognise it, as knowledge habitats are lost and its narratives become fragile, indigenous knowledge is simply neglected. The role of neglect in hegemony.

And there is a connection here to hope. Hope also offers a softer reading of how hegemony is maintained – not only through manufactured consent, not only through the institutionalised power of the school system, but through too, the very human need to hope.

FIFTH POIESIS

SCULPTING KNOWLEDGE

Poiesis Outline

Prologue
Sculpting knowledge
Postscript

Sculpting Knowledge

PROLOGUE

This poiesis is concerned with sculpture – as a form of indigenous Knowledge practice, and as an alternative way of knowing. The poiesis is a response to a week spent as an apprentice for a Ladakhi sculptor who was making new religious statues for the monastery at Thiksey. This participatory methodology aimed at exploring the process of apprenticeship from within - to give a more embodied knowledge of the processes. The week was spent within a prayer room of the monastery itself, where the sculpture was being constructed.

Sculpture, as an indigenous knowledge practice intersects with many of the research themes. First, religious sculpture largely operates in an alternative space to western knowledge processes - both in terms of is training (which is apprenticeship), and its location (which is monastic). Second, in the very physicality of the process, it focuses upon the experiential and embodied nature of knowing that I wish to emphasise. Third, Tibetan Buddhist religious sculpture is not only iconic, it is pedagogic – acting not only as objects for discussion and story, but as meditational objects for self transformation. As such, sculpture also offers a way to explore part of an alternative educational process in action. Fourth, and finally, sculpture manifests alternative ways of knowing, foregrounding non-verbal ways of knowing and representing.

SCULPTING KNOWLEDGE

The largest and most famous statue by Ngag-bband-tshe-ring is the Maitreya he fashioned in 1979 and 1980 in the monastery of Thikse. It rises for about 14m in height from the lower story of the temple devoted to that bodhisattva, and its head – bearing a crown decorated with the five cosmic Buddhas – has become one the symbols of Ladakh.

(Lo Bue, 2005: 362)

Sculpture has always fascinated me. I have spent time trying to do it – some stone carving, metalwork mostly. Sculpture appeals more than painting – sculpture is tangible, physical - something made – a manifestation of an idea, a skill, a body. Sculpture helps us to focus upon the material, how the whole business of praxis and poiesis is wrapped up in the stubborn plainness of things, in 'tool being' (Harman, 2000).

The thought that I might spend a week working with a sculptor had come from a chance meeting with a drum maker in the market in Leh, he says,

> *I had this Swiss man once, stayed with me to make a drum. It took him one month, he said laughing, how long does it take you? I ask, Seven, six days.*

I am not into drums, did not have a month to learn, but clay sculpture – now there's a thought!

A couple of days previously, I had asked Nawang if he knew one, he had, of course, 'Another Nawang Tsering', he said laughing 'down near the bus station, at Skalzangling'. So with, Stanzin, we headed off to as ask around, try to find him.

The old man who warmly invited me into his home, I would later read about as,

> *The greatest Ladakhi sculptor of the 20th Century, and one of the greatest in the history of Ladakhi Art*
>
> *(Lo Bue, 2005: 360)*

but for now, all I knew was that he was a man who sometimes made statues of Buddhas – just didn't know just how big, how famous. He says,

> *I am sorry, I am old now, I am not doing anymore, but my son, Rigzin, he speaks good English, he is doing. He's making a sculpture at Thiksey now, back tomorrow. You come here tomorrow 7.30. You go with him there.*

By 10am the next day, I was already busy with hammer in hand squashed in the gap between the walls of two buildings at the top of the monastery – behind the red building at the top of this photo – learning the Ladakhi meaning of 'dunches' - hammering small balls of clay and cotton wool over and over, to mix them.

———

In research terms – I was looking for an indigenous knowledge practice that was still held in high regards that I could participate in – both in methodological terms of participatory methodologies, but also in the sense that Lave and Wenger (1991) use it – as participation in a community of (indigenous knowledge) practice. As a pseudo apprentice, I was hoping to see an example of how such knowledge is passed on, while having an opportunity to ask questions over a longer, more natural time-span.

As an indigenous knowledge practice, sculpture also intersected well with theoretical interests. Not only are its practices rooted in traditional knowledge, but, as religious art, it is both philosophically rooted in non western forms of knowledge and ways of seeing the world, and economically rooted in an alternative economy – that of the monasteries. As a practice, its products – statues of Gods – are not only religious icons, but also pedagogic tools – also giving an insight into a form of educational practice that is very different from western schooling

———

And for now, at least, it feels like I have crossed over a line. I have been to this monastery before, during my first visit, just like any other tourist. Now I am sitting here, as a worker, while other tourists walk past, ask me what I am doing. A line stepped over so easily, through a tea and a chat with Rigzin father.

No – this is too easy – this is all too natural. There is something here – openness, ease, trust. Let us not pass over this moment without acknowledging this. Let me not pass over this moment without thanking Rigzin, Cunchok, his assistant, and perhaps most of all Tashi, the young monk, my co-'dunches' worker for their openness and companionship that week.

———

Of course, there were other exchanges taking place. I do not seek to romanticise this moment – simply to state that it felt wholesome to offer my labour in return for this experience. That in the shared labour of these days – in the aching back and blistered hands that is available to all, I was, in part, able to play down the authority that I necessarily carried with me.

———

This was my experience those first few hours - learning, and an instruction of sorts:

> *The sound of hammer on clay when hit right / hold the handle loosely – you won't get blisters / have a tea / what that liquid – stick? What is stick? Stick! - ah yes, glue? - why did it take me so long to work that out / is it done enough yet? – no, more! Is it done enough? Just a little more – is it done enough – now OK / see the fibres are evenly distributed.*

———

By the next day, I have learnt many things. This is what I can do:

I can use a hammer for hours without getting blisters. Can sit cross-legged for one hour. Can tell when clay and cotton wool are mixed. I can stare at the mountains for hours. I can sit with someone and not talk. I can let my mind relax.

Later, I am reading a paper (Inoue, 2006) that tells the story of the German philosopher called Herrigel learning Zen archery in Japan – mid 20th Century. The line of his master, Kenzo Awa, resonates,

How should I explain what you can understand only through your experience?

(quoted in Inoue, 2006: 230)

This learning is embodied. I have mentioned this before. Embodiment /experience – twinned, intertwined concepts.

Embodiment – a term both used in Buddhist and in postmodern approaches. The idea is 'worded - made word / wrapped up in words / become words / translated into words / an idea made manifest. But as to whether it is possible to have a wordless experience, how far words are inscribed through to our core is not relevant here. This is a paradox – we cannot do without words, they are necessary. But they are the raft that we can let go of, overcome – we can search for a truer, wordless understanding of embodiment.

Within Tibetan Buddhism, the proper relation of study and practice is articulated in the concepts of trangdön, "straightforward or literal meaning," and ngedön, "true or actual meaning." Trangdön is the conceptual version of the dharma, the words as they exist in the texts and the discursive teaching. Ngedön is the inner meaning as realized in meditation.'

(Ray, 2000:363-5, emphasis in original)

Rigzin is making the faces for the sculptures - four for the main figure. He sits for hours, silent, tracing the lines of the faces over an over and over - making imperceptible changes that slowly bring them to life. They are beautiful. Cunchok is making the body – adding layers of clay, papier maché style. Tashi and I are hammering away.

'The other is never to be known unless one arrives at a suspension of language, where the reign of codes yields to a state of constant non-knowledge, always understanding that in Buddha's country (Buddha being, as some have defined, a clarity or an open space), one arrives without having taken a single step; unless one realises that what in Zen is called the Mind Seal or the continuous reality of awakening, which can neither be acquired nor lost; unless one understands the necessity of a practice of language which remains, through its signifying operations, a process constantly unsettling the identity of meaning and speaking/writing subject, a process never allowing I to fare without non-I.'

(Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1989: 76)

A fieldnote:

Two days in the monastery. What to write. A list of how to do things probably, what is being done – start at the beginning – indigenous knowledge – change – schools. I find it difficult to ask questions of Rigzin and maybe, as with the oracle, Ayu Lhamo, this is unnecessary. Rather than worry about how I might ask my research questions of Rigzin, I should simply become open to the way that the situation wishes to answer them – it is simply up to me to hear.

I am fascinated by the unspoken. Ladakh is a place where words are never pinned down, there are always multiple meanings, there is always an under-determination of meaning here, just as in Bhutan. But also too because my own coming-to-know here is in English – a second language, an alien language. Words are always slightly out of shape. Mine too. Communication fragile. But perhaps this is a gift too – simply a realisation that this is always the case.

There is a particular quality to the sound of this silence – breathing, wind, voices far away carry here, we feel the mountains watching us. This prayer room, this workshop is a meditative, a necessary silence, art is wordless. The workshop is filled with the noise of silence, not a lack of noise but a quality of sound - a sound that nurtures.

There is a particular quality of mind that comes from such work.

Perhaps the two are related. The mind is both open, empty. Sufficiently focused to be alert, sufficiently repetitive to be freed, sufficiently varied to be creative.

In the silence there is a shift from speaking to listening. It no longer seems necessary to speak in order to elicit the words of others that I might then hear. No longer seems necessary to be verbally present in order to take meaning from this experience.

> ***Unlearning means stopping oneself from always wanting to correct, teach, theorise, develop, colonise, appropriate, use, record, inscribe, enlighten: the impetus to always be the speaker and speak in all situations must be seen for what it is: a desire for mastery and domination***
>
> ***(Kapoor, 2004: 642)***

This silent space of the prayer room is a place of construction, but it is also a place of learning. First there Rigzin, Cunchok, Tashi and I – our small community of practice. There is a strict hierarchy here - Rigzin shows Cunchok things, Cunchok shows Tashi and I. Both Rigzin and Cunchok direct Tashi and I, but if Rigzin directs something, it is still Cunchok that shows us how to do it.

But this is also a fluid learning space – with other bodies and thoughts flowing through it, different pedagogies enacted. Ladakhis and Monks come in and out. Monks discuss with Rigzin aspects of the statues that he is making. Others come in to see how the sculpture is being made, tourists discuss.

If western knowledge has its libraries, Monastic knowledge has its sculptures. Of course, I exaggerate, say this rhetorically – monasteries have their libraries too, have their own wordiness. The Gelugpa tradition, in particular, which is the Dalai Lama's own tradition, is particularly scholarly in its outlook, and yet, there are others dimensions here – meditation, enchantment – aspects of transformation that are less cognitive.

The sculptures manifest a different form of knowing, a knowing beyond words – ideas, possibilities latent in their materiality, their spirituality, their wordlessness - learning that is not possible through words alone.

There is sculpture functioning as pedagogic object – monks 'teaching' visitors through discussing aspects of each statue in turn – stories to be told, philosophies to be expounded, and lessons to be learnt. Not the accumulation of new knowledge, but the interpretative potential of what is crafted in each sculpture.

And then, beyond this there is the transformation that comes from contemplation on the meaning of these statues. They challenge, they direct. This is not learning in a western sense, it is a space *that offers transformation*, if you choose to seek it. Statues that might be understood, to use *Werbner's evocative* phrase

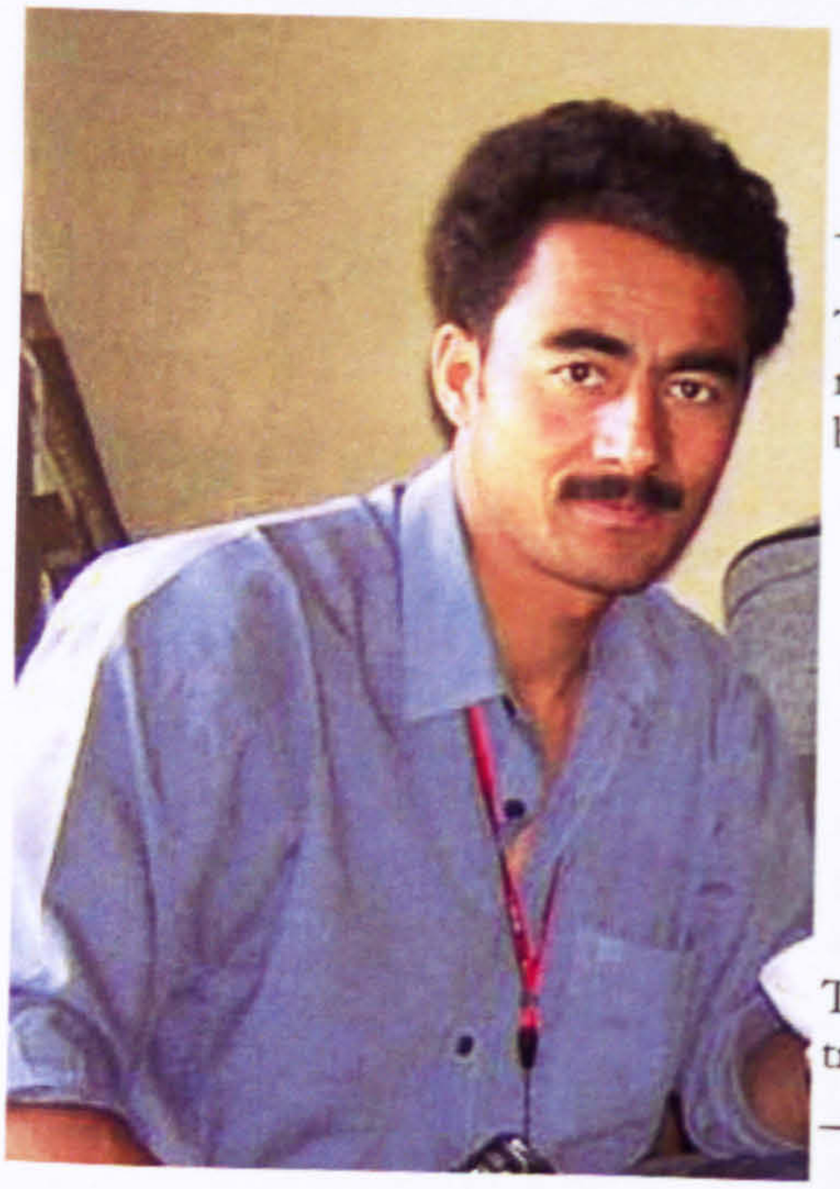
(Werbner, 2001) as 'ritual monsters', offering an organic hybridity, an organic space for reflection and transformation.

Werbner take the distinction between organic and artificial hybridity from Bakhtin (1981) and contrasts the colonial encounter as one between artificial 'Others' producing hybridity, and indigenous 'ritual monsters' producing reflection and transformation.

The process of making the sculptures is both the same and different, to what I have seen in Bhutan. In Bhutan, I have seen not cotton wool, but the mashed up bark of a particular tree, not 'fevicol' glue, but glue made from boiled down animal carcasses. This is not a comment on the loss of traditional ways of doing things in Ladakh. I do not know, Rigzin does not know, how this process has changed. I see indigenous knowledge in a non essentialised way – it is a practice that changes, adapts, transforms, like any other. This is a contemporary practice, using currently available ingredients; it is also an indigenous one.

Rigzin, works using what looks like a tape measure with irregular makings on it, always checking the precise distance between the eyes, the length of the chin.

> *What is that? I ask*
> *It gives the measurements of the sculpture.*
> *Oh I see. Where do you get it from?*
> *I take it from this book. My father gave me the book.*



The manuscript looks old, is shaped like a prayer book, rectangular. Is this the manuscript that Lo Bue (2005) refers to as being owned by Rigzins father?

> *He further owns a manuscript bearing the title g.ya-sel-nas, 'byung-ba'i sku'i cha-tshad rtogs-byed-dang thig-lam rnam grangs mngon-rtogs, which was given to him by his master. It presumably deals with the proportions of images as presented in the Baidūrya g.Ya'-sel, the famous treatise completed by the regent in 1688 and consisting of replies on controversial points (...).*
>
> *(Lo Bue, 2005:364)*

There is both tradition and modernity here – modern ingredients, traditional manuscripts, traditional apprenticeships.

There is prestige, respect here. Here perhaps of all places - Rigzin sculpting his statue only a few metres away from the huge Maitreya Buddha made by his father. We are brought endless tea, snacks, lunch, we are treated well by the monks, given silent respect by most tourists.

In participating in this group, I feel the respect afforded this practice. This is no marginalised indigenous knowledge practice about to be lost. This is a man, who knows that his work is highly valued, makes Buddhist sculptures and masks for buyers all over the world.

> *'I have confidence. I find it easy. Everything no problem*

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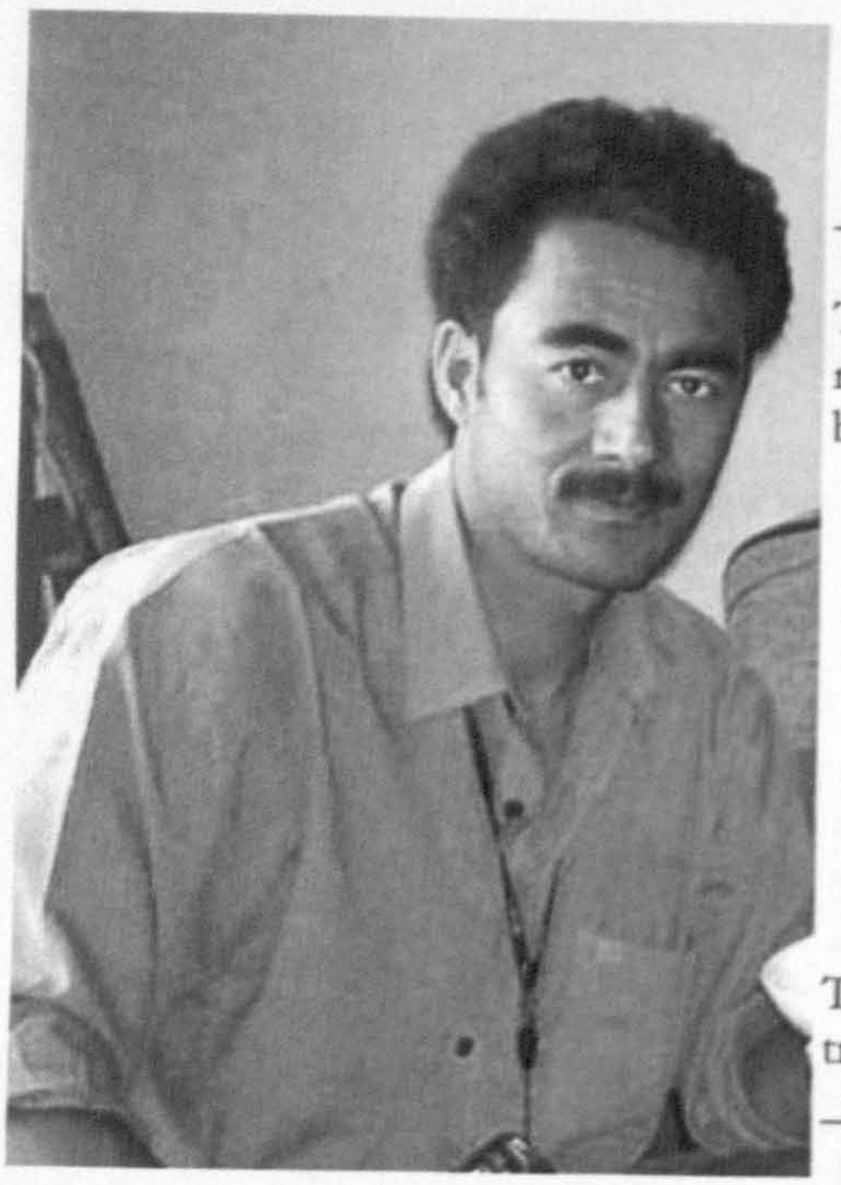

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> *'I have confidence. I find it easy. Everything no problem*

We both enjoy in our different ways that reversal of roles that my positioning as Rigzin's helper allows. ***'He is my student'***, Rigzin explains, smiling, to people who ask.

While I enjoy the reflected glory of being part of this small team – the ego of the crossing into a non-tourist space - this is one of the other exchanges that are taking place at this time. ***'You should give me a certificate in Dunches'***, I say to Rigzin.

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But it is not only this. This is also something else here – something about respect. In Bhutan, as a teacher, I would have to bow as I entered the Headteacher's office – just a small bow, bob of the head. This was expected. In turn, students would bow to me as I entered a classroom. It was strange this explicit hierarchy, at first.

I do not pass judgement on this, only note the resonance here between this experience and working for Rigzin. We might see this as unacceptably hierarchical, we might seek to offer critical readings of how such a structure works for Rigzin's benefit, who gets the glory, while keeping apprentices doing all the unpleasant tasks.

But I know that here, a desire for a critical reading is complicit with ego, that this is too narrow a reading. I have felt the touch of living with respect as a meaningful way of encountering others in the world - not only the impulse to endlessly remind ourselves that we are as good as everyone else, but also to also to live with the realisation that others are sometime better.

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On the third day I was there, the deity entered the sculpture.

———

In the morning, four senior monks come into the room, and while we continued to do what we were doing, carried out a Puja, a recitation of prayers. This process is no simple consecration of the statue. As an icon, the statues are not simple sculptures – they are gods made manifest. We are not consecrating a statue, this is a 'Rab gnas' ceremony, where we bring a god to life.

'the interior must be filled with rolls of mantras wrapped around a wooden dowel, called the 'life stick' (srog shing), which runs from the crown of the head to the base of the image. (…) The purpose of the ceremony is 'to cause the deity represented in the image to enter into and thus animate the image.'
(Lopez, 1999: 151)

———

This thought stuns me for a while. This activity, this practice that I have been engaged in now has different meaning. It is a sacred activity. It is not clear to me anymore how I might understand the value of what I have been doing.

———

The god is chanted into taking up residence in the statue. But this is no serious affair – there is much hilarity. My interpretations are limited - the monks appear to compete with each other as who can read the prayer the fastest. Occasionally there is pushing and shoving. We all stop for tea, juice. In the afternoon, the prayer done, the body of the sculpture is filled up. There is much debate amongst the monks as to exactly what should go in – particular types of incense, small roles of prayers, prayer flags, a sandlewood stick, with mantras written on it.

'Thus, far from being the high symbolist art that it is always pointing to something else, away from itself, always standing for something else, a Tibetan image in not, in an important sense, a representation of the deity at all, but the deity itself'
(Lopez, 1999: 153)

———

Be careful to see the silences, see the not seen. Here, amidst the chaos, and seriousness something is present.

A connection, a memory. Bhutan, going to a talk given by the man who was to be the head of the soon to be expanded 'Institute for language and Cultural Studies' - a university college of traditional knowledge. His ease, his confidence, his playing with the possibilities of this new college – the vision, the direction, the easy ownership - in sharp contrast to the ways that Bhutanese engaged with issues of schooling and education.

The ripples of western education do not appear to touch here. The monks educated in the monastery; Rigzin trained by his father, Cunchok by Rigzin. This is an alternative economy, where Rigzin's skills are rewarded by monastic cash. It is not that this is a margin that has produces its own centre - it is the old centre that has remained.

For four days, I revel in my role as subordinate, happy to stir up counter narratives in the eyes of those that come along. Then, I write in my fieldnotes:

> *Fieldnote:*
>
> *The last days with Rigzin and our suppressed fallout has been tiring, but educative.*

On day four I pushed things a little. Wanting to have a different experience than simply hammering, I ask if I could take some other tasks, have a go at some of the things that Cunchok is doing. There is a direct no.

> *Rigzin: You don't have experience at this. He (Cunchok) has five years of experience.*
> *Dave: I have experience of doing some sculpture in England, it is not like this, but I have some skill. I could learn.*
> *Rigzin: But you don't have habit of this work.*
> *Dave: No one knows how to do something unless there is the chance to try to learn.*

After this, Cunchok appears friendlier, but this is another space of unknowing – are we sharing a subaltern position, or is he simply happy that he remains privileged, perhaps this is all my imagination.

What I can know, is that there is a direct call to the value of experience, in creating authority,

> *I know how hard dunches is, I did it for years, Rigzin says.*

This call to experience is a something that reappeared in many contexts, many interviews. Here is Nawang Tsering talking about his own family – his father a farmer, his daughter having just graduated with an MA in Agriculture.

Dave: what about another example, say knowledge of agriculture, how do people learn?
Nawang: That people learn from their elders
Dave: just learn in the family
Nawang: he knows so much [nodding towards his father]. You should see the varieties of vegetables he grows here. He is a real farmer. She, she might have lots of theoretical knowledge from books, but she doesn't have experience you know. I know. That paper of mine you read, I do it in two days, you see because I have experience. My father he has experience.
Dave: So knowledge is practical knowledge about how to do things
Nawang: Exactly

Perhaps the most interesting point here is that a call to experience is being used as a counter category to other knowledge claims. In the case of Rigzin, as an explicit counter to my own knowledge claims (this form of sculpture is not western sculpture, your knowledge is not relevant here), and in the case of Nawang, as a counter to western university learnt knowledge.

These examples show ways that experience is used discursively to legitimise the authority of certain people, certain positions, in ways that are contrary to those afforded by western knowledge structures. This is interesting, resonates with, validates even my own position - that the experiential has counter hegemonic potential.

And, perhaps, we can trace some of the lines of this experiential counter narrative. A.H. Francke, was a Moravian missionary who wrote extensively on Ladakh. In the late 1890s he found himself as the head of the small mission school in Leh, and wrote an article about the school and its situation in the mission magazine 'Hermhut'. In a recent English translation of this (Francke, 2005), Francke writes,

> *The majority of the population of Leh is Buddhist. There is a minority of immigrant Muslims and a small number if Hindus belonging to the ruling class. Only the last two religious groups are convinced of the advantages of education and, where possible, send their children to school. The Buddhists are always farmers and have inherited from their forefathers that agriculture is best carried out by those who have no book learning*
>
> *(Francke, 1898/2005: 282-3)*

But while this experience is in one way validating, it is also deeply uncomfortable, and perhaps this is what is valuable of it. I might understand the powerlines that make my request impossible, even reflect on its naivety, and yet, I still feel the silencing of the exchange, feel the ways that Rigzin, in taking a very narrow view of 'practice', my experiences are not validated, are seen as irrelevant.

It's not the first time that I felt on the other side of the power lines.

> *Once in Zimbabwe, on old lady, drunk, comes over, starts drunkenly to beat me, my friends disengage her arms, explain to me - 'She doesn't like white people.'*
>
> *Another time, the market in Thumphu, Bhutan. A young girl, perhaps six years old, starts throwing stones at me, most don't hit, don't hurt anyway. But she sits with an older girl, teenager. She does nothing, simply watches while the younger almost distractedly continues to throw.*

In these moments, I become only 'white', nothing more.

I am aware that I have brought it on myself, deliberately chosen this subaltern position to witness this practise from. I might instead have reframed this encounter with more authority, know too that had I done so, I would not have had the chance to understand something important.

If we go back to Michael Jackson (1998) and to the process of recognising the explicit in me to the latent in others, this is perhaps, a little of how it feels to have one's knowledge, one's experiences not validated perhaps.

And this points us further, takes Santos and goes further. If Santos (2004), uses the metaphor of uses the metaphor of 'silencing' to describe the process of delegitimation of non western knowledge this is perhaps too constrained by metaphors of the discursive. It is not subtle enough, does not take us far enough into an experiential world where it is not only that the subaltern cannot speak, as Spivak (1985) tells us, but that the experiences of the subaltern cannot be recognised.

> *The subaltern tries to speak, the powerful refuse to listen*
> *The subaltern experiences, the powerful do not notice*

The directionality is rather different, places responsibility differently, opens up a space to understand neglect, carelessness in hegemony.

Silencing is an active process, and quite rightly Santos wishes to draw our attention to the lines that mark the negative space of the unspoken. But lack of recognition is a more thoughtless affair, a sin of neglect, as those in power might simply not care to notice, choose not to ask, hurry past busy with their own lives. We might simply not care to engage in the worlds and lived realities of others. In our simple carelessness, we choose what to recognise, what to show interest in, what to witness and what to let our eyes glaze over. In this neglect is our violence. In our lack of attention is the possibility of experiential and epistemic violence.

POSTSCRIPT

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this experience was the lack of apparent impact of western education on this practice. Rigzin, taught by his father, also a master artist, commissioned by the Monastery to make a new sculpture, an enactment that was clearly respected by all. This was a practice operating in its full glory.

There was a temptation to simply say, great, at last validated indigenous knowledge, let's move on to places where the ripples of western education can be seen. And yet, that this experience stands out amongst all the data as the only one untouched, made me wish to include it – what were the articulations that allowed this practice, and more – what were the lessons for counter hegemonic possibility that it revealed?

This poiesis responds to these questions by offering themes of silence, creativity, embodiment, marginality, creativity. There is a connection somewhere between the marginal, the emancipatory and the creative. The world is endlessly made anew, poststructuralism tells us. The new that is the same as the old is the status quo, reinscription, reproduction, the new that is different from the old, we define as creativity. Being creative, in this sense therefore is always an act of resistance. Creativity can be understood not just as a process, but as an achievement - newness made manifest.

How might it be possible to measure assess, speak about, empowerment? Perhaps, if this argument is followed, the degree to which we can imagine something different, the degree to which creation is possible. Or put the other way around - the fact that we find ourselves unable to think of alternatives is a mark of our disempowerment.

In the end of course, such experiences are always complex, and perhaps highlight the limitations of a simple hegemonic/counter hegemonic analysis. The Monasteries, within whose alternative economy this practice is situated, have been a dominant power across Ladakh for centuries. One only has to look at the landscape and see the physicality of the monasteries compared to the village houses, or to the wealth that the monasteries hold. Indeed, I was amazed to find, in one village that there were still some families that might be referred to as 'serfs' – people who were give the right to farm land in return for one family member working full time for the monastery.

The role of the Tibetan Buddhist Institutions upon indigenous knowledge practices in Ladakh would be another thesis, and has only been touched upon in here. But that said, the wealth and power of the monasteries allows for an alternative economy within which this traditional sculptural practice operates.

As Michael Apple has pointed out, not all resistance are progressive (Apple, 2005). Certainly this practice operates counter hegemonically vis-à-vis western forms of knowing; whether is operates emancipatorally is a different question, and perhaps one

that is not for me to comment upon. What can be said, however, is that the practice highlights a number of different alternative directions – for alternative ways of knowing, for pedagogy and for research.

———

The ways that sculpture operates as a manifestation of forms of knowing, reveals and calls into question the hegemony of the textuality of western knowledge – both the knowledge that is found in schools in Ladakh, and also our research knowledge that is particularly taken with metaphors of the discursive. It offers instead ways of knowing that operate trough the tacit, the unspoken, the physically created. Here, the concept of 'experience', was used counter hegemonically to legitimate these alterative forms of knowing, and validates the use of this concept in my own research.

———

But perhaps most productive of all was the way that the experiential reveals different mechanism for hegemonic reproduction that are based as much on neglect and carelessness as on active silencing. This is a theme that was also seen in the third poiesis and will be discussed further in the final chapter of the thesis.

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HOW DRUKPA KUNLEY SANG A SONG OF RESISTANCE

We bow with reverence to the glory of Kunga Legpa,
Naljorpa exterminating every subject/object dichotomy,
Taking the life of every last delusion spontaneously,
Piercing the heart of the dualizing factor with the arrow of non-duality
(Dowman (trans), 2000: 119)

On his return from Lhasa, the lama entered a dry region. On his way though a small village he met a group of women and children waiting at the bus stop. ***'Oh fair ladies where are you all going on such a day, when there is work to be done in the fields and songs to be sung?'*** asked the lama.

'We are going to town to take our children to school, one replied. The others nodded in agreement.

The lama then turned to the children. ***'Children, where are you going on such a day, when there are places to explore and games to be played'***, he asked again.

'We are going to school so that we can know all of the important things in the world. Knowledge is power', said one.

Drukpa Kunley went on his way, until a little further down the road, he came cross a group of men in a field taking a break from their ploughing.

'it's a magnificent new school' one man said

'it was the vision of a great lama', said another
'it's much better than the school in the village - that one is no good, said a third.
'Our children will learn things we were never able to learn.', said the forth. The others all nodded in agreement.

So Kunga Legpa sang them a song

The Yak that can find his way over the mountains brings happiness to the village
The Dzo that knows the field brings contentment to the farmer
The seed that will grow on the shady side of the village brings happiness to the mother
The dung that smells the sweetest brings happiness to the seeds
The snow that falls in the mountain brings contentment to the stream
The sapling that grows tall brings contentment to the tree
And the chang that is the strongest brings happiness to the drunkard

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SIXTH POIESIS

AUTONOMY / MARGINALITY

Poiesis Outline

Autonomy/Marginality

PROLOGUE

This poiesis offers an historic thematic reading of the geo-political context of Ladakh. From around 950AD when Ladakh formed as political entity, until its fall to Dogra rule in 1834 was the golden time of Ladakh, the 'Age of the Independent Kings,' 'Rgyal-dus'. Here, its twin status - 'on' - the famous 'silk' route that, in Ladakh's case carried 'Pashmn' wool for Pashmina (Cashmere) shawls from the Tibetan Plateau to the Kashmir weaving industry and 'between', the larger more powerful empires to both East and West, gave Ladakh an ambivalent autonomy.

This betweeness, that had lasted for almost 900 years, was to be replaced by a new marginality, as Ladakh found itself colonised, taxed, subject to demands of obligatory labour, and administered – at the farthest edge of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This marginality was to be only exacerbated after Indian independence, when, following wars on its territory with both Pakistan and China, borders would be closed.

This poiesis argues that these twin themes – of a constructed colonial marginality, and of the desire for a pragmatic autonomy that recognises the reality of its geopolitical position are important in understanding the nature and direction of educational reform in Ladakh.

AUTONOMY /MARGINALITY

Autonomy

In the upper India, the doctrine of religion reigns.
And ere this reigns ends, the doctrine of conch shell reigns.
The sacred white conch does say, "The commander of religion am I".

In the lower China, the doctrine of law reigns.
And ere this reigns ends, the doctrine of silk reigns.
The sacred white scarf does say, "The commander of law am I".

In between them, in Ladakh, the doctrine of music reigns.
And ere this rule has ended, the doctrine of beer reigns.
The delicious nector-wine does say, "The commander of music am I'.

(Phuntsog, 2004: 76)

Ladakh, La-dags, the land of many passes.

'La' - Mountain passes. Perhaps for those not used to mountains they might be seen to symbolise impenetrability - that it is only by finding the pass that we might enter into this land, on the other side. But for mountain people, there is another reading the 'la' is that which connects, which allows movement.

Ladakh - between many things.
Between different peoples – the Dards of Baltisatan, the Mons of North India, the Mongols of Central Asia.
Between, perhaps most importantly, the high Tibetan pastures that are the grazing grounds of the goats whose soft underfur grows to protect it against the bitter colds and the weavers of Kashmir who weave it into the expensive shawls we know as Pashmina, or Cashmere, whose market stretches around the world.

So by the time, in 727 AD, Hui-Ch'ao, a Chinese pilgrim, making his way from India to Central Asia would write of passing through a Buddhist area he describes as being under the suzerainty of the Tibetans, the beginnings of a hybrid people were already laid.

The country is narrow and small, and the mountains and valleys rugged. There are monasteries and monks, and the people venerate the three Jewels. As to the Kingdom of Tibet to the East, there are no monasteries at all and Buddha's teaching is unknown.

(Quoted in Rizvi, 1983: 37)

As the fertile western valleys of Ladakh were being colonised by the Dards with their knowledge of irrigation from the west, the Mons were bringing knowledge of Buddhism from the South, and the eastern regions were being entered by nomads from the Tibetan Plateau. Their meeting was mutually beneficial for, as Francke puts it,

---

The sun rose from the east,
The warm sun of the east.
May the warm rays of the sun,
Give warmth to the fatherland.
May the beautiful light of the moon,
Give light to the centre of Chuchot.
On this auspicious day,
I the boy, left home on tour.
On the advice of the astrologer
I, Ali, left home on tour.
When I reached the top of the Khardong pass,
I was able to see the fatherland.
From the top of the Khadong Pass,
I could see the thousand houses of chucot.
When I reached the top of the Sasser La,
The horse began to neigh.
And I understand the horse's feelings,
For it recalled the good grass of Chucot.
(in Shakspo, 1993 : 73)

The indigenous Ladakhi population is a blend of races – the Mons of North India, Dards of Baltistan and the Mongols of Central Asia. Over the centuries they have formed a distinct racial community which differs from the Tibetan on the east, the Uigurs in the north and the Kashmirir of the west.
(Stobdan, 1989: 6 in Bertelsen, 1996: 107)

Ladakh, because if its geographical situation and its cultural variety, is know by various names which give a good description of the regional conditions. The most prominent among the names given to it by local scholars are: La-dwags – the land of the passes, Bla-dwags – the land of the Lamas, Mar-yul – the red land, Man-yul – the land of the people and Mnah-ris bskor-gsum – Western Tibet.
(Shakpso, 1993: 1)

By the time that Hue-Ch'ao passed through, Ladakh had already been Buddhist for almost 1000 years, having arrived from India around 200 BC, during the reign of the Emperor Ashoka of the Mourya dynasty of India. Francke (1907/1999) suggests that it is the carpenter-musicians 'Mons', that were the people who originally brought Buddhism to Ladakh.

> *products of the field were as welcome to the Tibetan nomads as the products of the flock were to the Dard peasants, and the lively barter which took place between the two tribes apparently led to many matrimonial "bargains" as well, and so a race grew up which combined the agriculturalist and the nomad.*
>
> *(Francke, 1907/1999:47-48)*

This time of nominal suzerainty to Tibet by the minor lords of different parts of Ladakh was to come to an end, as a direct consequence, according to Rizvi (1983) of the chaos that would ensue following the break-up of the Tibetan Empire in 842AD. Buddhism did not come easily or quickly to Tibet, and while within Buddhist folklore we have images of padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) entering Tibet riding upon a tigress, at a political level, the reality was a protracted power struggle with indigenous animist Bon-chos beliefs. As Crook (1998) tells us,

Guru Rinpoche riding a Tigress, Huntingdon Archive

> *Padmasambhava conquered the demons of Tibet, putting them under oath to support the dharma. Yet this was a negotiated truce because the powers of the land still remain their untamed selves in other respects. They are dubious converts who have to be constantly reminded of their vows, of their subjugation to a superior rationale.*
>
> *(Crook, 1998: 35-35)*

But this rapprochement, in which the world would remain filled with gods, spirit and demons was still to come – here at the break-up of the Tibetan dynasty, there were both pro Bon-chos, and pro Buddhist factions. Crucially for Ladakhi history, a member of a the Tibetan royal dynasty, Nyima-Gon, left Tibet to take up residence in what is now Eastern Ladakh, where he felt, with its greater proximity to the Buddhist centres of Kashmir, he could find more religious support.

And so, around 950AD, the 'Age of the Independent Kings,' 'Rgyal-dus' began. It was a time that Bray has described as Ladakh having lively political and economic link existing between it and surrounding powers (Bray, 1991) - a time that Sikander describes as

> *a glorious age of songs and festivals that really inspired poets and artists to sing and reveal the glories of Ancient Ladakh. In their countless songs, sagas and artifice.*
>
> *(Sikander, 1997: 11)*

Let us stop here a moment – in this golden age. It is here, in my experience, when Ladakhis talk of their history, they refer. This is another time of before – before colonialism – a time of independence that was not without its upsets, sandwiched as it was between two expansionist empires, playing off one side against the other, at times accepting the nominal suzerainty of Tibet, or the Mughal empire or both.

This game of political survival was to shortly come to an end, when in 1819, neighbouring Kashmir fell under the control of the expansionist Sikh empire, Tshe-pal Namgyal, the king of Ladakh

calculated that his advantage lay with the more distant British, and, using the opportunity of the visit of William Moorcroft, a British veterinary surgeon, on the search for horses who was staying in Leh from 1920-22 sent offers, supported by Moorcroft of an allegiance with the East India Company. A treaty of 1809 between the British and the Sikh Durbar, Ranjit Singh, however, prevented the British from interfering so far North, and gave the Sikhs free reign.

'On the one hand I averted from an amiable and harmless people the oppressive weight of Sikh extraction and insolence and on the other, I secured for my country an influence over a state, which, lying on the British frontier offered a central mart for the extension of her commerce to Turkistan ad China, and a string outwork against an enemy from the North, should such a foe ever occur in the autocrat of the Russias'
Moorcroft, 1837: 420-1. in Rizvi, 1993:60)

The fears of the Ladakhis were to prove correct, when, in 1834 Gulab Singh the Dogra Vassal in control of Jammu, under the authority of the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh, ordered his General Zorowar Singh to invade Ladakh. Ladakh was easily defeated, having no standing army, and occupied. In the following year, setting his sights further afield, Zorowar Singh proceeded to invade Tibet. Tibet, unlike Ladakh had both it own army and was supported by the Chinese who, more prepared for the high altitude fighting overran the Dogras back to Leh. In 1842 the Treaty of Leh was signed maintaining the borders, with the Tibetans recognising the Dogra as rulers of Ladakh and the Dogras abandoning all claims to Tibet. Thus Ladakh, its king deposed, came under the colonial control of the Dogra dominion.

Four years later, in 1846, the Sikh war would be over, Gulab Singh would purchase Kashmir from the British, and Ladakh would be incorporated into the new state of Jammu and Kashmir, under the direction of a Maharaja, where it remained until accession to Indian Union in 1947.

Marginality

And so, after almost 900 years as an independent kingdom, Ladakh would be colonised. The British would remain in nominal suzerainty, according to the treaty of Amritsar, and a

> *British representative oversaw external affairs and trade issues in cooperation with a governor from the Dogra administration from 1870 right until Ladakh followed the rest of the state into the Indian Union in 1947*
>
> *(Bertelsen, 1996: 100)*

But at a practical level, the administration of Ladakh was left to the Dogras. And while Rizvi (1993) notes that

> *On the whole however Dogra rule does not seem to have been duly oppressive'*
>
> *(Rizvi: 1993: 67)*

This view is not shared by most writers on the subject. Shakspo notes that

> *The roots of Buddhism planted by the religious Kings were shaken and an atmosphere of anarchy set in*
>
> *(Shakspo, 1988: 47)*

And as far back as 1907, Francke notes that,

> *But another blessing of British rule, the wise administration of revenues, and the encouragement of the much shaken agriculture of the country, have been withheld from Ladakh, as the administration remains in the hands of Dogra and Kashmir officials. Since 1842 the country has made little progress. This is even observed by the natives, who have compare other portions of western Tibet which have come under British rule, in particular Lahoul, and the difference between the two districts economically in surprising*
>
> *(Francke, 1907/1999: 168)*

But perhaps we should not look to academics and historical sources to pass judgement here, but to Apile Thinley that we met in the first poiesis to understand the way that this colonial period has impacted upon life. While, Grist (1994) talks about the 'begar' system as,

> *an obligation on the part of the household to provide services relating to government transport of goods and people. From one stage to the next.*
>
> *(Grist, 1994, quoted in Bertelsen, 1996: 103)*

Somehow this does not quite capture the obvious pain, trauma even that this experience inflicted that we hear in the narrative of Apile Thinley. Indeed, most of the people I talked to who had lived during this colonial time, spoke with passion about the beatings and forced labour.

As part of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh was, at the independence of Indian from British rule, subject to the delicate negotiations over the future of this state. Indeed, the political future of Ladakh was far from clear. As Ladakh had been under the control of the Dogra dominion for twelve years prior to the treaty of Amritsar that had, in 1846 created the state of Jammu and Kashir, the dissolution of the treaty of Amritsar upon accession to India, in theory might have paved the way for Ladakh to become politically independent, and thereby able to make its own decisions of its future. With the poor colonial relations between Ladakh and the state of Jammu and Kashmir since 1834, administrative independence was desirable, and direct accession of Ladakh, as an independent political unit, to the Indian Union was called for.

This was never to be a realistic political possibility, considering the already fragile state of the accession of Jammu and Kashmir, and so Ladakh joined the rest of the state into the union in 1947.

As Apile Thinley tells us, independence brought with it the curtailment of the worst of the colonial excesses, and in particular the end to the 'begar' system and a redistribution of land. And yet in other ways the changes have been more dramatic.

The breakdown in negotiations over Jammu and Kashmir at inpendence saw Muslim troops getting as close as 20km from Leh in 1948, before being repulsed by the Indian Army to Kargil, further down the Indus valley where the line of control still stands despite two further Pakistan wars in 1965 and 1971.

In 1962, the Chinese army invaded from the East, and this time, now with it own fighting force, Ladakhi troops were instrumental in withholding the Chinese army. But the price of the withholding was the closing of the border to Tibet.

And so, while Ladakh remains, as it has ever been, sandwiched between the Tibetan (now Chinese) power to the East and the Muslim (now Pakistani) power to the west, this new configuration is a particularly solidified one, with closed borders, where there had been open ones.

The final stage in the story begins, here at least, in this simplified account, in 1989. The attack upon a young man, a member of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, in Leh Bazaar by a group of Muslim men, sparked off unrest that had been building over previous months. Bertelsen (1996), in his detailed account, suggests a variety of reasons for this unrest – corruption along communal lines, the forced conversion of Buddhist women to Islam upon marrying a Muslim man are given, amongst others.

The agitation for greater political freedom was first successful in awarding the Ladakhi Buddhists 'Scheduled Tribe Status' in 1989, followed by more wide ranging freedom by the formation, in May 1995 of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), with its own council, budgetary control and elected representatives. LAHDC remains under the control of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and the ultimate goal of directly joining the Indian Union – so called Union Territory (UT) status, remains still today a distant goal for Ladakh.

POSTSCRIPT

This brief context of Ladakh has highlighted two themes that are relevant for understanding the developmental and educational trajectories of Ladakh.

The paradox of autonomy and betweeness that characterise the time of the independent Kings of Ladakh (950-1834) are crucial for understanding a desire for greater political independence, and a sense of the Ladakhi identity that, as we shall see, is part of an educational 'localisation'. At the same time, this is a pragmatic independence, one in tension with the need to accept the realities of a future that is within India, and the need for an educational system that does not become separated from it.

It is in this context - of a now semi-independent, historically autonomous, Tibetan looking community that understands that in the new post-colonial world they find themselves, it is only through an engagement with India that their future lies – but this, like all the engagements with outside powers in the past, is an ambivalent one. This is the context that the narratives of attempts at educational reform and localisation that we now turn take place.

SEVENTH POIESIS

RESISTANCE: EMBEDDING WESTERN SCHOOLING

Poiesis Outline

Resistance – Embedding Western Schooling

PROLOGUE

This poiesis is concerned with the forms of 'resistance' that are taking place in the Ladakhi education system - resistances born from the dark days of the late 1980s and early 1990s when pass rates in class X exams were often as low as 3% in government schools. The semi autonomous status that came with the formation of the Ladakh Autonomous Development Hill Council (LADHC) in 1995 meant that reform of primary education (up to class V) was possible, and an ambitious programme developed between the government and an NGO, SECMOL, was initiated.

Alongside these reforms within the government schools, Ladakh has seen a growth in non-governmental schools – initially not-for-profit schools, and more recently, for-profit schools. Both the not-for-profit private schools and the government schools, seek, in different ways, and with different discourses, a form of localisation that is understood by those within them as offering resistance to the inappropriateness of the school system that existed before.

This poiesis looks at these changes within the Ladakhi education system as examples of local articulations of resistance, and considers them from the particular perspective of an indigenous knowledge standpoint. In understanding these changes, the themes of ambivalent autonomy and constructed marginality developed in the previous poiesis are drawn upon.

RESISTANCE: EMBEDDING WESTERN SCHOOLING

Forms of resistance

Keesing, in revisiting early anthropological work in the Solomon Islands, describes how, while he had been invited to become the primary agent in a process of writing out local 'Kastom' (custom), later realised that,

> ***Although initially I had thought that the 'Committee House' was constructed as an adjunct to my ethnographic project I eventually realised that I had been incorporated into their project.'***
>
> ***(Keesing, 1994: 42)***

Their 'project' of creating written 'Kastom' was part of a defence against a colonial legal system, which, in its legal recognition of certain traditional customs, prompted this semi-fictionalised codification that Keesing became instrumental in producing.

As well as offering a reminder that the search for an 'essential indigenous' is neither possible nor desirable, it also exemplifies Gramsci's point that, as Keesing phrases it here,

> ***the discourse of the dominant shapes and structures the discourse of the dominated***
>
> ***(Keesing, 1994: 41)***

Resistance, in its very conceptualisation, implicates that which it is resisting – resistance to something. But more than this, the dominant, precisely because it is so, defines the sites and directions of its very resistance. To use a different vocabulary, this is a slightly different formulation of the paradox that Spivak famously created, 'can the subaltern speak ?' (Spivak, 1985) – a double entrapment – first by the colonial, and then by the forms of resistance that it allows.

The potential for agency in the colonial encounter has been much focused upon, by concepts such as hybridity (Bhabha, 1994) and by poststructuralist conceptions of power, that emphasise, how, in the necessity to reinscribe power, the potential for reinscription, resistance, always exists.

I wish to redirect this thought, send it backwards; look at its shadow.

> ***Post-structuralist conceptions of power reminds us how, in the very act of attempts to decolonise, lies the possibility of reinscribing the colonial.***

A word – localisation. Perhaps indigenisation suits better. I am telling Sonam Wangchuk, the director of SECMOL that I am interested in indigenous knowledge and the education system. He says,

> ***SW: If you are interested in indigenisation, that would be us.***

'Shortly after installing me in the house they had built for me at ngarinasuru, a thousand feet up the mountain wall rising above Sinalagu Harbour, the Kwaio commenced construction of a large 'Committee House' adjacent to mine - in what I foolishly thought then was an adjunct to my project. In the subsequent eighteen months what Kwaio called the 'sub-district committee' met at ngarinasuru every Tuesday entailing a gathering of scores or sometimes hundreds of people. The kwaio leaders of devoted themselves to straightening out Kastom, 'custom' through endless discussions, debates and sessions of litigation. Kastom - centrally comprising genealogies, lists of lands, and lists of ancestral taboos - was to be written down and I was cast as primary agent in this process.
Keesing, 1994: 42)

There is a subtle rephrasing here - from indigenous knowledge to a process of indigenisation. From a quality of what is, to a process of… what?

Wangchuk, I feel, uses the term counter hegemonically, as I do, as that which is not colonial.

> ***SW:** When the first schools were open, everyone wanted government jobs and with class V you could get government jobs but now everyone is getting educated and not enough jobs are there, so now we have to go back to indigenous things. It comes full circle from indigenous back to indigenous.*

And yet, I feel uncomfortable with this expression. I do not know why at first? Indigenisation - the coming back to that which is of us Ladakhis.

Perhaps I go too far. I do not wish to over interpret his expression – I wish to use it to draw a line of thought – that indigenisation, if understood as suggesting a process of making indigenous, suggests an impossibility, points towards an illusion. We might do many things to western education in a non western context – we might seek to bring indigenous knowledge into the curriculum, we might seek to make it more locally relevant in many ways, but we cannot make it indigenous - it is not - it is a colonial institution. It is not, organically, of Ladakh.

One might seek a different reading perhaps – look for a potential hybridity where we might see how both western schooling and Ladakh are both transformed by this encounter.

I do not do this. First, and perhaps most obviously, if this encounter were in reality doubly transformative, we might expect to see a diversity of schooling practices across the world. It would seem that the self-evident similarity of school systems around the world when placed alongside the equally self-evident cultural diversity would suggest that western schooling has been stubbornly unreceptive to change, while the impact of schooling on cultural practices has been enormous.

Secondly, and for me more importantly, the possibility of indigenisation, as a concept, as a discourse, suggests both the possibility of this transformation, while at the same time, drawing a veil over the very non-indigeneity of the school system. Clearly, for a research that seeks to trace the subtle lines of the operation of western education on indigenous knowledge this would be inconsistent.

Instead we might offer a different association to the term indigenisation – one borrowed from current literature on globalisation, where,

> ***the process by which a given local condition or entity succeeds in expanding its reach over the globe and, by doing so, develops the capacity to designate a rival social condition as local.***
>
> ***(Santos, 1998: 135)***

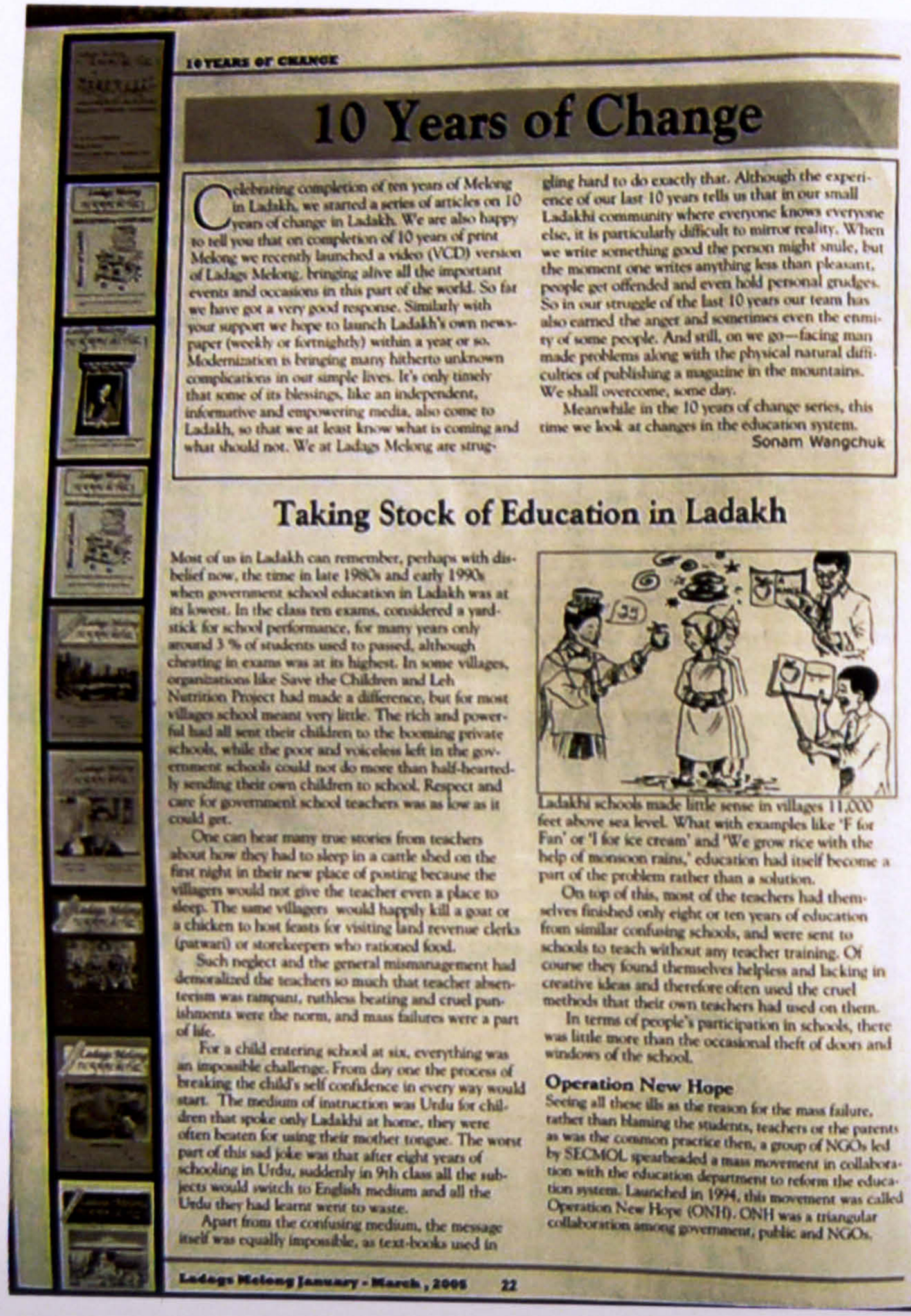
I have said indigenisation is an illusion. If something is indigenous, it does not need to be indigenised; if it is not indigenous, then it cannot be made to be so. A call to indigenisation must necessarily therefore be a call to bring in and make local(ly acceptable) in some way that which otherwise is not.

This wanders dangerously close to essentialist territory, and the border is only faintly drawn by Gramsci's concept of the organic. But I use these terms heuristically, not essentially. I do so to direct a gaze towards the subtleties of the processes of localisation – to how we might distinguish between a resistive, transformative localisation and one that is an entering, an embedding, where indigenisation can be understood as a form of permitted resistance, a 'chameleon' transformation of western schooling into a form that is more able to be embedded into non-western contexts.

In different ways, the processes of reform of the education system in Ladakh operate around discourses of indigenisation. For government schools, this involved, following the creation of the LADHC in 1993, the ability to modify its primary (up to class V) curriculum – a task carried out by the government in cooperation with SECMOL, under the name of Operation New Hope. The Ladakhi textbooks that have been produced for this seek to offer a curriculum appropriate to Ladakh. Perhaps more critically, was the change of medium of instruction in 1994 – from Urdu medium from class 1-8 followed by English from class IX-X, to English throughout. The next page gives an overview of these education changes, as given by SECMOL

The localisation agenda has also been taken on board by many private, 'non-for-profit' schools, that make claim that they are offering Buddhist influenced education, many, but not all, being sponsored by Buddhist groups, having senior Lamas as patrons, and receiving sponsorship money from the West. Recent years have also seen the rise of many 'for profit' private schools, in Leh. Although this last group do play a role in modifying the landscape of educational possibilities, I have not specifically looked at these schools, as they, unlike both of the first two groups were not explicitly claiming to offer educational change that was 'Ladakhi'. As such, in taking 'resistance' as an analytic category, I have chosen to include that which has been labelled as such by the Ladakhi organisations involved.

Finally, in analysing the different trajectory of 'indigenisation' of these two resistances, I am taking an 'indigenous knowledge perspective' – i.e. in what ways have these changes to the school system influenced the effect that it is having on the mechanisms of loss of IK previously outlined.



10 YEARS OF CHANGE

10 Years of Change

Celebrating completion of ten years of Melong in Ladakh, we started a series of articles on 10 years of change in Ladakh. We are also happy to tell you that on completion of 10 years of print Melong we recently launched a video (VCD) version of Ladags Melong, bringing alive all the important events and occasions in this part of the world. So far we have got a very good response. Similarly with your support we hope to launch Ladakh's own newspaper (weekly or fortnightly) within a year or so. Modernization is bringing many hitherto unknown complications in our simple lives. It's only timely that some of its blessings, like an independent, informative and empowering media, also come to Ladakh, so that we at least know what is coming and what should not. We at Ladags Melong are struggling hard to do exactly that. Although the experience of our last 10 years tells us that in our small Ladakhi community where everyone knows everyone else, it is particularly difficult to mirror reality. When we write something good the person might smile, but the moment one writes anything less than pleasant, people get offended and even hold personal grudges. So in our struggle of the last 10 years our team has also earned the anger and sometimes even the enmity of some people. And still, on we go—facing man made problems along with the physical natural difficulties of publishing a magazine in the mountains. We shall overcome, some day.

Meanwhile in the 10 years of change series, this time we look at changes in the education system.

Sonam Wangchuk

Taking Stock of Education in Ladakh

Most of us in Ladakh can remember, perhaps with disbelief now, the time in late 1980s and early 1990s when government school education in Ladakh was at its lowest. In the class ten exams, considered a yardstick for school performance, for many years only around 3 % of students used to passed, although cheating in exams was at its highest. In some villages, organizations like Save the Children and Leh Nutrition Project had made a difference, but for most villages school meant very little. The rich and powerful had all sent their children to the booming private schools, while the poor and voiceless left in the government schools could not do more than half-heartedly sending their own children to school. Respect and care for government school teachers was as low as it could get.

One can hear many true stories from teachers about how they had to sleep in a cattle shed on the first night in their new place of posting because the villagers would not give the teacher even a place to sleep. The same villagers would happily kill a goat or a chicken to host feasts for visiting land revenue clerks (patwari) or storekeepers who rationed food.

Such neglect and the general mismanagement had demoralized the teachers so much that teacher absenteeism was rampant, ruthless beating and cruel punishments were the norm, and mass failures were a part of life.

For a child entering school at six, everything was an impossible challenge. From day one the process of breaking the child's self confidence in every way would start. The medium of instruction was Urdu for children that spoke only Ladakhi at home, they were often beaten for using their mother tongue. The worst part of this sad joke was that after eight years of schooling in Urdu, suddenly in 9th class all the subjects would switch to English medium and all the Urdu they had learnt went to waste.

Apart from the confusing medium, the message itself was equally impossible, as text-books used in

Ladakhi schools made little sense in villages 11,000 feet above sea level. What with examples like 'F for Fan' or 'I for ice cream' and 'We grow rice with the help of monsoon rains,' education had itself become a part of the problem rather than a solution.

On top of this, most of the teachers had themselves finished only eight or ten years of education from similar confusing schools, and were sent to schools to teach without any teacher training. Of course they found themselves helpless and lacking in creative ideas and therefore often used the cruel methods that their own teachers had used on them.

In terms of people's participation in schools, there was little more than the occasional theft of doors and windows of the school.

Operation New Hope

Seeing all these ills as the reason for the mass failure, rather than blaming the students, teachers or the parents as was the common practice then, a group of NGOs led by SECMOL spearheaded a mass movement in collaboration with the education department to reform the education system. Launched in 1994, this movement was called Operation New Hope (ONH). ONH was a triangular collaboration among government, public and NGOs.

If it doesn't work, change it

The spirit of the movement was that all rules and policies are manmade and are for the benefit of people, if they are not serving their purpose, especially in a place like Ladakh, then they should be changed. The movement aimed primarily at the government schools, as they covered 90 % of the children.

Medium Changed

In 1994 the medium was changed from the confusing two alien languages to one, i.e. English, with a long term target of changing it to mother tongue in seven to ten years. Initially this was seen almost as a separatist move by J&K State, but seeing the benefits, by 2002 the State Government itself decided to apply this policy to the whole state. And in 2003 Thupstan Chhewang announced in public that the primary education would soon be switched to mother tongue.

The Message also changed – Textbooks

By 1996 Another project was launched to change the text books that made no sense to children in Ladakh, and by the end of 1998 there were several textbooks that reflected life in Ladakh that the children could easily relate to. In 2003, facilitated by J&K cabinet minister Rigzin Jora, the J&K Board of School Education decided to print and distribute the ONH text books, making it now part of the mainstream.

Teachers trained rather than blamed

From 1995 SECMOL along with the Education Department conducted massive residential teacher training courses for almost all the teachers in government schools in Leh District. Teachers took the training seriously, and there was a major change in the work culture in the Education Department. Today's teachers are dedicated, punctual and regular, and crude physical punishments are becoming a thing of past.

Villages were organized rather than overlooked—VECs

In 1996 and 97 a campaign was launched by senior level students at SECMOL in almost every village, and by the end of 97 all villages had a functioning Village Education

SECMOL students on one of the first village education campaigns, in 1997

Thupstan Chhewang was advisor to ONH back in 1993

Committee. The idea was to promote people's ownership of government schools. Under ONH, a team has been continuously building the capacity of this village institution.

Government – non-governmental cooperation

In all these projects the Education Department was a partner, with their teachers deputed on the project, though the frequent change of Chief Education Officers made it often very stressful and difficult to operate. It would have been impossible to coordinate the movement, had it not been for the stable government of the Hill Council that backed the movement in every way.

The introduction of the Hill Council status proved like a boon for this education reform movement. The leaders of the Hill Council, being local were very familiar with the issues and Thupstan Chhewang the Chairman of the Council was himself closely associated with the launch of ONH since early 1994. In 1995 when the new Hill Council came into being, it declared Education as the topmost priority and ONH as their official policy on education. Rigzin Jora who became the Executive Councillor for education took special interest in the spread of ONH to all parts of Ladakh.

Some other Changes

Although the above measures were the main targets of change in Operation New Hope, several other steps were taken, these were also mainly possible due to the importance the Hill Council gave to education.

Teacher Transfers systematized

Before the mid-nineties the teacher transfer system in Leh was as messy as in the rest of the state. Some teachers had to move from one remote area to another, while other rich and powerful ones never moved out of Leh town. Rigzin Jora took a bold initiative and introduced the system of rationalised transfers – by rotation in zones based on remoteness from home.

Councillors' Education Campaigns

Ladakh might be the first place in India where all the public representatives go on an organised week-long campaign in which they don't touch anything political and limit their focus strictly to building awareness around education.

Vacation change & solar schools

Another important point that SECMOL had been advocating for nearly seven years, was to change the school vacations from winter to summer. Normally schools close in winter when the villages have nothing to do, and they are open when children could learn so much in the burning season.

Finally this became a reality when Rigzin Spalbar as

Ladags Melong, 2005: 22-23

Localisation / reform

In 1899 A.H. Francke the Moravian Missionary and Ladakhi scholar running the mission school in Leh wrote, in an article to his missionary society magazine that,

> ***The majority of the population of Leh is Buddhist. There is a minority of immigrant Muslims and a small number of Hindus belonging to the ruling class. Only the last two religious groups are convinced of the advantages of education and, where possible, send their children to school. The Buddhist are always farmers and have inherited from their forefathers the idea that agriculture is best carried out by those who have no book learning***
>
> ***(Francke, 1807, 1999: 282-3)***

According to Reifenberg (2005) local resistance to the school was based on a fear that,

> ***'The children would be transported to England and would be forced to convert to Christianity, or that they would be so highly educated they would no longer wish to do manual work***
>
> ***(Reifenberg, 2005: 281)***

So, let us not pretend that the current high status afforded education in Ladakh has been a natural and inevitable response by Ladakhis to the possibilities of schooling. In Francke's time, resistance to the school was so severe that it closed within a year of opening in 1887 due to low numbers, only to be opened two years later in 1989 after the Wazir, the local ruler and representative of the Dogra empire that ruled Ladakh after its successful invasion 1834, simply ordered that every family with more than one child should send one of them to the school.

For a small population, with small families who had always sent one family member to the monastery, ordering one child to attend school might have had as much to do with attempting to reduce the power of the monasteries than, as the Wazir stated, he felt guilty that Ladakhis were unschooled in,

> ***Customs and manners, arts and knowledge***
>
> ***(quoted in Reifenberg, 2005: 281)***

Whatever the true intentions of the Wazir, this suspicion towards schooling was to be brief, and, as Bertelsen (1996) writes, as early as 1933, when the Glancy commission was set up by the British to hear petitions from the different representative group in Jammu and Kashmir state due to some doubt on the part of the British of the effectiveness of the rule of Maharaja, we hear a series of requests for an improvement in education provision. Particularly irksome for the Ladakhis was the Urdu medium of instruction, a foreign language and script for the Ladakhi Buddhists, and a call to increase literacy rates through the provision of special education officers for the Buddhists and more careful selection of teachers of Tibetans – to be brought from outside if necessary. The upshot of this educational disadvantage was that,

May it please you Highness,

With profound devotion and humble submission we the Buddhists of Ladakh beg to invite your kind attention to the following:

This community is the most backward of all the people loving in your Highness' dominions. It is an admitted fact that Education is the only means of bettering the conditions of the people and it is in this that Ladakh Buddhist lack the most(..) our community is quite ignorant of the blessing of education, and no improvement is possible without government aid.

(1933 Representation of Buddhist demands to the Glancy Commission, quoted in Bertelsen, 1996: 116)

Because of this, the Buddhist have been deprived of their share in the public services, therefore they get menial work of the hardest and least lucrative type.

(1933 Representation of Buddhist demands to the Glancy Commission, Quoted in Bertelsen, 1996: 120)

This situation was not to change in any major way for the next sixty one years.

Let us remain here for a moment – in these sixty one years - throughout the remaining years of colonial rule, throughout the first forty seven years post independence. Schools that were Urdu medium schools for class I-VIII, a foreign language to students who spoke Ladakhi at home. And then, after eight years in this foreign language, students who progressed to class IX, had to switch to a different foreign language as a medium of instruction - English medium. It is unsurprising that pass rates for class X were often as low as 3%.

One can well imagine the lack of seriousness that communities would have treated these schools, and the lack of seriousness of teachers working in such situations. As one of the zonal education officers (ZEOs) told me in an interview, in a typically understated way,

Matric refers to class X pass, +2 refers to 'A' level equivalent – i.e the two years following matric

ZEO: Before 20 years ago, there was problem, many teachers were not qualified, some matric, few +2, few graduates, some class VIII pass, so they were experienced, but with the changes and new syllabus and like that they were not able to adjust. Some problem was there, but now there is change. The teachers are qualified.

I meet a young guy on the bus one day. In the 30 minutes that it takes us to go from Leh to Saboo he has told me a brief history of his life story, of the days before educational reform.

I went to school in Saboo only, at the Government school. We had such trouble. We studied E for Elephant, and I had no idea what an elephant was. I thought maybe it was the size of a mouse. So this is how we studied. I studied in Saboo to class IX, and then joined in Leh after that. We suddenly had to learn everything in English – my God we had to learn everything in Urdu before. What a waste. Now I cannot write a single word in Urdu – not much to show for 8 years. Our parents thought that Urdu was useful, because property is registered in Urdu. So I did class IX and then took a couple of years off, then I tried again and did some more work and got promoted. Everyone else had been to private school. We were only 2 out of 50 pupils had been to government school. We would get up at 5am to study. Those who had been to private school they took it easy. Then I went to college, Jammu. I work for Jet airways at the airport. I used to do some guiding work. I would go to a group and say, Look I am not a qualified guide, I can take you around, you know, translate what the monks are saying, like that. I have a group this year to collect people from Manali, and bring them up, show them around, take them back.

I am talking with Wangchuk, the director of SECMOL,

> ***DB: 'What made you interested in these issues'***
> ***SW: 'My suffering in the system. No really like that. I had to suffer the system. learning things that meant nothing and getting told off for not knowing things that meant nothing. You ask what made me interested – it is not an interest it is a struggle.'***

One can imagine the passion that for those like Wangchuk who, in being successful in the system, suffered the longest, had for reform - something that was to come in the wake of the coming into being of the Hill council in 1995, and the possibility of some educational reform. As Becky, also of SECMOL and wife of Wangchuk notes,

> ***BN: We were successful at getting education reform by awareness raising at the village level, getting them to demand a good education, and so it became a political matter.***

Political indeed – the mobilisation of a demand that had been waiting for sixty one years, to be addressed, a demand located in colonial administrative practices that were inappropriate for Ladakh, an area that remained, after independence at the margins. The change from Urdu in class I-VIII to English throughout happened in 1994, was immediately followed by a massive improvement for class X pass rates. In 1996, a project was launched to write primary textbooks more appropriate to Ladakhi students.

Class X (matric) Pass Rate (Leh, Ladakh)	
Year	Result (%)
1996	5
1997	5
1998	5
1999	7
2000	23
2001	36
2002	35
2003	49
2004	55

(Ladags Melong, 2005:24

The change from the 1990s when,

> ***in terms of people's participation in school is, there was little more than the occasional theft of doors and windows of the school***
>
> ***(Ladags Melong, 2005: 22)***

To the present day, with the central place given by all to education must attest in part at least to the success of the mobilisation of the village community by SECMOL. The irony that SECMOL, in mobilising villagers to the benefits of education and promoting educational reform in government schools has led to an increased marginalisation of government schools in the rush for private education perceived as being better, is not lost on Becky, who notes that,

> ***BN: Maybe we were too successful – One of the hostel girls she is from Nubra, she went to the local school, but she has three brothers and sisters and they have all gone away one to army school, and two others in private or semi private school around Leh. Her father; it was good enough for the first child, but the others all went out.***

You can see, in Saboo, the history of this brief moment – when people had been mobilised to demand a good education for their children from the government, when the reform that went under the name of 'Operation New Hope' had begun, and before the move onto private education - in the carcasses of four community built primary schools across the village. As George,

chair of Saboo Village Education Committee, the institutional arrangement set up during this reform time to mobilise village action eloquently says,

This interview, as with others referred to in this poiesis were conducted in English

> ***GE: There used to be five primary schools in Saboo – one for each part of the village – the villagers built them in the spirit, once, of hope in good education – but then the numbers declined, and each was insufficient to hold on against the flood - together they might have been stronger – but all five closed down.***

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I hear a regret here – not only in the closure of these schools, but also in the loss of collective action that, if all had worked together, might have been sufficient for the village. The shift from a 'working for the good of the village' - that phrase that people in Saboo village often used - to one of competition amongst people in the village.

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From the government side, issues within the education system are dominated by competition with private schools. As the Leh ZEO expressed it,

> ***DB: The government schools are competing with the private schools?***
> ***ZEO: Competing yes, but private schools are winning. There are 10,000 students in private schools in Leh district. There are 30 private schools here.***
> ***DB: And how many students in Government schools***
> ***ZEO: 12,000, But there are 400 schools – some places there are only 4,5 houses with just a few students, but still we have to have schools there and put two teachers.***
> ***DB: It must be very expensive,***
> ***ZEO: Very expensive. The Hill Council is spending a lot of money on education. But the private schools are not in the remote areas, they don't want. We keep asking them, why don't you want to go to remote areas, but they don't want – it's too expensive for them.***

I had already seen the haemorrhaging of pupils from the government to the private sector in Saboo, but was still shocked to discover the extent of the situation. Comparing approximately 330 pupils per school in the private sector with 30 pupils per school for the Government sector.

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Competition for:

Which schools are the 'good schools', which schools are the 'serious schools', where, ***'the schools compete with each other for who has the best uniform' (Wangyal, NGO worker)*** – a competition where wearing traditional dress is clearly not an advantage (I heard of no school that has traditional Ladakhi dress as a uniform). A competition where 'Buddhist' red, is the colour of choice for most schools.

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This competition for parents, for students, for qualifications is discursively engaged with through concepts such as 'serious school', 'good school', inevitably focused upon grades, pass rates, quality of teachers. It is this that means that when, a few days into

the week I spent teaching in Saboo Junior High School, when the headteacher appeared, teachers began to beat students.

In this competition there is little space for other conceptualisations of the 'good'. Here is Becky from SECMOL again, talking about the possibilities and limitations of bringing indigenous knowledge into the curriculum.

> ***BN: It makes me feel bad because we can't get much indigenous knowledge into the textbooks.***

And later,

> *DB: Do you do anything explicitly about indigenous knowledge. I mean, I get the impression that you circle around this issue?*
> *BN: You might say we are not explicit in this, we wrote the class IV science. This is the one that we had a bit of freedom in, because class VI is already the Indian syllabus, and so class V we should be preparing them for that, so class IV – there was a section on plants and animals, something safe. We couldn't have a real approach such as asking pupils to find out locally - that wouldn't work. We tried that during Operation New Hope, and teachers didn't understand where is the knowledge, what should they test?*
> *DB: What do you think would happen if you introduced that sort of thing?*
> *BN: They wouldn't do it. So we ended up putting in nine examples for around Ladakh, of course not all examples apply everywhere in Ladakh, but I don't feel bad about that*
> *DB: Of course not*
> ***BN: Ladakhis are learning about the different places in Ladakh.***

The high hopes of indigenisation – reduced to 'something safe', that could not be 'real', because of the pressure to conform to the dominant epistemological and pedagogic attitudes.

And so the government finds itself hands tied, on the one hand by limits of administrative freedom, and on the other, by the need to offer an education that will allow pupils to be successful in a wider Indian context, as the ZEO notes,

> ***DB: Are you using the same textbooks for the rest of the state?***
> ***ZEO: We use the same for higher classes, but we have, the government has developed some of our own textbooks in collaboration with SECMOL.***
> ***DB: Fantastic, for which class?***
> *ZEO: Class I-V is there, but just now schools are using class I-III, IV and V are in progress.*
> *DB: So is it possible to make Ladakhi textbooks for other class – VI, VII, VIII*
> *ZEO: Not possible, we are here in J and K state, we have to follow the J and K syllabus, after class X many students they go out to Chandigarrh, Jammu, they should know. After class V they are mature enough to cope up with the state syllabus, and they should know about other states and other parts of India. There is also education board for J and K, and we have to get approval for what we do.*

J and K refers to Jammu and Kashmir

This sense of resigned limitation ran through all of the interviews with people involved in the government school system. When I talked with Becky about this, I get,

> ***DB: Are you saying that there is a limit to the degree that the education system can be reformed?***
> ***BN: We are part of India, so we have to fit in with that in the end. Wangchuk is starting to feel that there is little more that can be done with primary education.***

The government education reforms have clearly been successful at improving the school system. From the perspective of most criteria of 'good education' the average pupil in a government school is no doubt better off now than in the early 1990s. It is easy, to go back to Keesing, to trace the direction of the reforms/resistances that focused upon parity of opportunity, back to the previous institutionalised failing of Ladakhi students.

Yet, in the direction of these reforms we can see played out the themes that emerged from the last poiesis - an ambivalent autonomy that places Ladakh both wanting to make its curriculum relevant, specifically 'Ladakhi', and yet, not only constrained by the practical limitations of its location within Jammu and Kashmir state, but more importantly, and perhaps we hear the echoes too of the constructed colonial marginality, a desire for Ladakhis to have an education that does not limit their opportunity to be part of a wider Indian Union.

However from the perspective of indigenous knowledge, these reforms can be seen to have achieved little in terms of indigenising the curriculum, while, at the same, the buy-in to education, as we saw in the third Poiesis, has led to an embedding of schooling with its mechanism of displacement that are seen to be associated with loss of indigenous knowledge

Localisation/privatisation

This disastrous state of the government education system in the late 1980 and early 1990 was clearly something that would prompt other attempts to circumvent this failing system as well as attempts to reform it. Not-for-profit private schools would be opened.

'You should visit Druk Padma school', Skama, a friend said, ***'it has won awards for the best eco-school'***. I had heard other things about this school – The head of another NGO had said ***'it has been set up by a lama, they say they are making a Ladakhi school'***.

The school brochure is glossy. In it, I read,

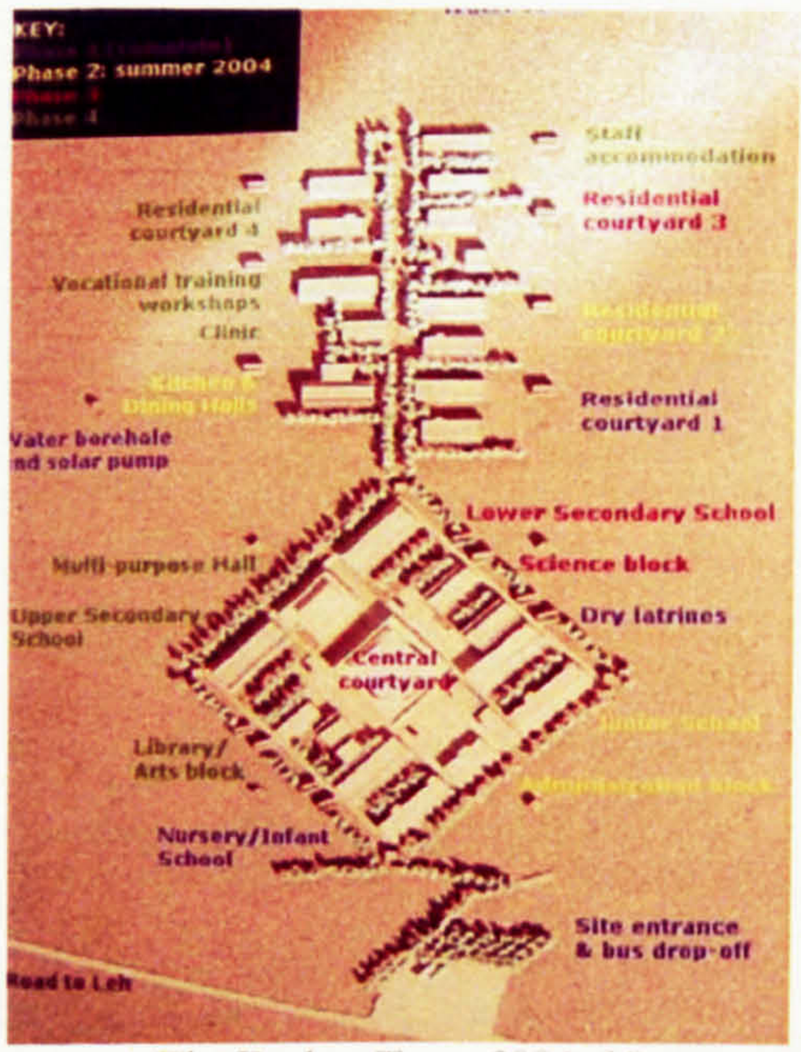
> ***The school master plan is in the form of a traditional 'mandala', with a residential spine stretching to the north, Also designed in the form of a key, the courtyard blocks form a symbolic space that in the words if His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa "can unlock the door to universal truth".***
>
> ***(The Drukpa Trust, 2004: 4)***

When I arrive, I do not see a Buddhist vision, or a Ladakhi one – I see a progressive English one – eco-design, Montessori pedagogy.

Inside the school, I feel as if I am in an English classroom. It is unsurprising – this school is funded from England, it has an English Principal, it just had a one-month long visit from an English teacher trainer.

I am interested here, particularly, in the Montessori dimension, in the potential, within this more child-centred pedagogy, to show how a more Ladakhi sensitive approach might be developed. I talk with project co-ordinator of the trust that runs the school,

> ***DB: So you do Montessori for the whole school?***
> ***SC: Not the whole school, we do Montessori for the first three years, and then normal class. It is difficult - we must follow the Indian system, we are here in Jammu and Kashmir State and so we must do. You know parents they expect homework, so now we have to start giving them some small homework, even though it is against Montessori.***



(The Drukpa Trust, 2004: 64)

The Montessori dimension further watered down, by financial constraints on training, meaning that the teaching staff are mostly young graduates with no teaching qualification.

> ***DB: And teachers go for training in Montessori?***
> ***SC: They went for training in Montessori before, but we found it too expensive. We train them and we don't know how long they will stay for so now we bring the trainer to the school. One lady, yes from England she was here. This is why the holidays were late. She came for one month it was not good to close the school while she was here.***

While the government schools, in attempting, as the ZEO explained, to keep village schools operating in remote locations, even for only a few pupils, the not-for-profit private schools find themselves in the paradoxical situation of having to charge fees, while, in order to maintain sponsorship for their activities operate within a discourse of offering an education for the poor, which by being fee paying, means that this is unachievable for the very poorest.

It is the geographical centrality of this, as for other not-for–profit schools that the ZEO alludes to, that is perhaps the biggest barrier to the resolution of this paradox, making the education doubly exclusionary for the poorest who themselves are geographically marginalised, and therefore would have to find fees not only for tuition, but for hostel accommodation and food – something that, as the project co-ordinator acknowledged they would not be able to afford.

Within this need to maintain a not-for-profit discourse, the veneer of resolution of this paradox is offered through sponsorship schemes for poor students that, again by the location of the school, inevitably means a dislocation of these students from their home.

A mandala is a Buddhist image that represents its cosmological beliefs.

DB: Where do students come from?
SC: Mostly nearby from Shey, Thiksey, but we have a sponsorship programme for students from far away. We go there to the remote places and find them, we look hard to find them
DB: How do you choose students?
SC: We have criteria we follow – we look for orphans, and poor students who do not go to school and places where there are no schools - but we don't take them at an early age. We do not take them before the age of 6/5.

We go there to the remote places and find them, we look hard to find them

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One can't but hear the echoes of 1889, the school officials going from house to house calling for pupils, while the parents hid their children away.

I am too harsh on this school - It is a beautifully constructed, ecologically sensitive, school, and no doubt offers far happier experiences for its students than many schools, as perhaps it should do considering its fee paying status, and the amount of sponsorship that it gets.

And yet, I wish to offer not a general critique of my impression of schools such as this, but rather have adopted a specific indigenous knowledge standpoint to encounter from. And from here, although one should not underestimate the role of form as an important aspect of cultural production, one can't but see a school in the shape of a mandala as symbolic for a superficial localisation that fails in any meaningful way to offer an education that is respectful of indigenous knowledge, while at the same time, playing its part in the maintenance of competition with government schools. It is to this competition that we now turn to directly.

Competing localisations

Although I have given separate accounts of these two forms of resistance, one does not have to look far to see that schooling is a site of competition – it is written in ten metre high letters across the hillside about Leh – Lamdon – Lamdon school – one of the first not-for-profit private schools in Leh, and one that has a high status here.

I spend a day visiting this school. It is well functioning. I can see that it might deserve the description of 'serious'. I feel I know this school – it feels like the school that I taught at in Bhutan – with its mostly non-Ladakhi Indian teachers (who better to know the system that students must achieve in), its smartly dressed students.

The first thing that I noticed as I enter the Principal's office is the small statue of the Eiffel tower on the desk. Perhaps this is intentional. There is a photo of him standing with the Eiffel tower in the background. *'We have an exchange programme with a private school in France, we took some students there the other year'*, he explains.

It is easy to believe the ZEO when he says that this is a competition that Government schools are losing – this school can charge high fees, and is well sponsored by money coming in from the west. Money does flow into the Ladakhi education system from overseas – but it does not flow into the poor government schools, but into the not-for-profit private ones that, in their success, I have argued, undermine the government schools that are serving the poor.

By chance I meet a group of French 'tourists', and get chatting. I ask where they are going,

> *FR: To Nubra. We went to Nubra five years ago, and saw the Lamdon school there - that time the school was small, just one class, and we decided to sponsor it.*
> *DB: And why Lamdon school, why not a government school?*
> *FR: I had one contact with Lamdon school, and, how do you say, it is a serious school!*
> *DB: Uh huh*
> *FR: This year we did a big project to raise money for a school bus, just now the army is helping but we wanted to bring students from other villages.*

'We wanted to bring students from other villages', she says – villages that for sure will have schools already – government schools that do not have money coming in from the west to buy them even pencils, let alone a bus. It is a veneer of localisation that allows this – the possibility that, by virtue of the fact that this school is not government, it must be Ladakhi, surely?

These last exchanges happen towards the end of my fieldwork. I have spent a few months in Ladakh, have built up an understanding however poor or partial. I find I am shocked by the openness, even cheerfulness, pride with which people speak sentences, in which I hear only destruction ,

> *we look hard to find them*
> *we want to bring students from other villages*

The history of colonialism has been a history of westerners thinking that they were doing good for the colonies - 'bringing the light of western knowledge to the natives', so I see little value in being too understanding towards westerners thinking they are doing good by sponsoring private schools. The poorest students of Ladakh do not need rich westerners helping the richer sections of Ladakhi society.

> *(...) the white cancer, an endangering attitude of mind whose 'response to the Others varies only according to the manner in which it believes the Others could be rescued from their situation,(...)*
>
> *(Trinh T. Minh ha, 1989: 54)*

Becky, from SECMOL talks to me about a school in the village of Phey. She tells the story of a Lady from the village returning home after working for many years in Europe.

BN: The people asked her to build a private school in Phey because they were having to send the young children on the bus to Leh, and they couldn't go by themselves because they were so young, so a young mother needed to go too, so they asked her to build a private school. But she said, look you have a perfectly good school already, if I build a school, what if I can't raise money each year will you be able to afford to pay the teachers?

The story of community money being used to support the government school is familiar, stands both in parallel and contrast to the private schools and their overseas money. I came across a similar one in Saboo – a new 'model' primary school had opened the previous year - reversing the trend of closures in the village, for now. As the ex-ZEO of the district, responsible for pushing through the project explained,

ZEO: You know we have this problem of private schools parents want to send their children to private schools. As the time I was for this area (...) but the role was going down and then closed, so I asked teachers to go around house to house and ask people why they don't send to the school, and they prefer private school, and we had some meetings and I told them, look you are wasting money, we have trained teachers in government schools and you are just spending money sending to Leh and the time involved.

This government school, as for the one in Phey, was also being financially supported by parents. As George, the chair of the Village Education Committee explained,

GE: There should be an attendant at the school. The students and teachers cannot clean the school or toilets, so I organised each parent to pay some money each month, and out of this we pay the attendant, and then I insisted them to buy some batteries so they can play nursery rhymes and like that - at least the government gave the school a tape recorder.

And yet, the relative financial position of the government school compared to the private schools was all too present. While the ZEO naturally made a case for the government schooling, putting the attraction of private education down to ignorance,

DB: So why do you think people prefer to send to private school
ZEO: Maybe ignorance. They do not know. They think if they can afford, they should spend their money sending to private school

George was frustrated at the lack of support of the school,

GE: It is a model school in name only. If you are going to call it a model school then you need to do more, provide qualified teachers. The government says in name only. They don't deliver. They say that they are giving twice the money per child than private school, but then what is there to show? In private schools you get benches and seats, two students per bench, but in the model school they are sitting on the floor that's not good is it.

In many ways the community financial support to government schools, is a sensible move, and if government schools are able to deliver, might, as the ZEO was appealing to, offer a sufficient economic incentive to keep education within the community. Whatever happens, I tend to agree with George when he says that,

GE: This model school is the last chance for government school in Saboo. If this one fails then finished now.

Escaping samsara

In different ways, both the educational reforms of the government sector and the discursive location of the not-for-profit private schools operate around a localisation agenda. And yet, both are constrained by the need to both function out of a paradox of autonomy and marginality that, I have argued is the geo political position of Ladakh.

While on the one hand schooling seeks to offer the possibility of a Ladakhi school experience, strengthened by the coming into being of the LADHC, on the other hand it must offer Ladakhis equal access to an India wide Higher Education system and jobs at a state and national level in order to satisfy the need to be an acknowledged member of the Indian Union, not simply a backward corner of a far off state.

As such, moves to indigenisation are constrained not only by the very real limitations of having only limited political autonomy that means that any educational reform must be approved at the state level, but perhaps more importantly, that any reforms must not be seen to disadvantage pupils who must, in any case, continue within a state-wide curriculum from class VI.

As such, the discourse of a 'good education', or being a 'serious school', or having 'good teachers', is privileged over other aspects of school life. Buddhist influences are left to be felt in the architects plan, or the colour of the school uniform. Curriculum reforms are self-censored in class V, lest pupils be disadvantaged in class VI. An understandable sensitivity to the views of the parents who will simply send their children elsewhere should they feel that their children's' ability to succeed in the system is being compromised.

And yet, one can still rue the fact that these 'resistances' are notable in their inability to engage in any meaningful way with indigenous knowledge. While both sectors are constrained – the government by its lack on money, by its secularity (that would restrict any nominal Buddhist allegiance), private schools by financial considerations and concomitant geographic centrality.

But perhaps it is the competition forced upon government schools by the presence of the private schools that does most damage. The analysis given in the third poiesis, of the loss of indigenous knowledge would suggest that the most critical factor, should maintaining this be an ambition, is having true community schools that would allow students to maintain a presence and engagement with community knowledge outside of the school, whatever the curriculum might be. As such, the superficial localisation of the not-for-profit schools both fails to achieve an indigenisation that the government schools cannot, while at the same time feeding a practice of dislocation and competition that undermines the potential that government schools have in maintaining a commitment to community based education, if not to support indigenous knowledge, at least to do less to undermine it.

I use the term samsara here, both as a locally meaningful way of conceptualising, and because there is a feeling here of entrapment in a system that we cannot escape from – that the more we try to localise it, the more we are simply taken further away from this possibility, the more embedded the inappropriate system becomes.

Trapped in the logic of the system. The same logic that kept me teaching maths, even though I know that this is useless knowledge. Bad schools are bad – no-one would want to see their child there – and so we wish to make bad schools 'better' - more effective at offering western schooling.

Throughout this thesis, I have drawn on Buddhist conceptualisations not only for their local relevance, but also for their emancipatory potential. As a concept, samsara directs us not outwardly to search for the point in the external world that we perceive the source of our suffering to be located, but inwardly to the ways that we create this world through how we respond to the illusions we have taken as truth.

And so, while I have sought to explore and understand the reasons for the forms of resistance that are present, this analysis suggests that it is the continued marginalisation of government schools by the private schools that creates and in so creating maintains a cycle of inequality.

POSTSCRIPT

Resistance is a problematic conceptualisation to research – who defines resistance? How might we ever know if we achieved it? How might we recognise a counter hegemonic moment? What perspective can we ever have that would grant us access to a view able to answer these questions?

But post-modern uncertainties also offer new ways to consider resistance, even as they appear to draw the rug out from under us. An understanding of the social world that is constantly being reinscribed reminds us that just because the present does not look like the past, does not mean that anything has changed. In Buddhist theory we might say that all is impermanent – that change is the nature of life. Fundamentally this suggests that educational 'reform' will always happen – but that we should not mistake reform for emancipation.

I have looked at those reforms and educational transformations that have been understood by the participants in them as resistive. In adopting a form of standpoint theory – an indigenous knowledge perspective – have offered a sceptical reading of these changes. I have argued that these changes are more than simply a new configuration of an old colonial education – that they are in fact an embedding of western education, under a veneer of localisation.

I cannot say that these changes are bad for Ladakhis – it would be wrong for me to say so, and I would not wish to make such claims - but I can say that I feel these changes are not in any way back to an indigenous knowledge – but have taken Ladakhis farther away from it.

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The debate around the future of Ladakh of which education is simply one small part, is a hot one, and this will feed only marginally into that debate. The paradoxes of modern life in Ladakh are much discussed, and I would simply wish to have the school system understood, not only, as most do, as a potential site for these paradoxes to be resolved, where,

> *an emphasis on the unique contributions that Ladakhi culture can make within its Indian context needs to be stressed in schools, with an upgrading of studies in the vernacular language, local technologies and local history. (...) the key to Ladakhi happiness and a beneficial balance of development and conservation depends primarily upon education.*
>
> *(Crook, 1994: 827, in Bertelsen, 1996: 95)*

but rather as one of the key sites where these ruptures are constructed. This simple shift reconfigures debates around educational reform – not how we might take a nominal notion of good schooling and use it to direct our efforts, but how might we develop a school system able to create increased social cohesion rather than social rupture.

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HOW
DRUKPA KUNLEY
BOUND
THE
DEMONS
OF
ARROGANCE

We bow at the feet of the Divine Madman, Drukpa Kunga Legpa,
Intoxicated by the divine face of the Goddess joyous Wisdom,
Recounting whatever occurs with flippant delight,
He is the fool who reveals the lie in the World of Vanity.
(Dowman (trans), 2000: 137)

One day the Kungpa Legpa went in search of the man who had been writing about him, magically appearing at the front door of his house. From outside the door he began chanting, '***Oh writer of great wisdom and compassion, come and let me read your text, so that I too might become enlightened about the treatise of decolonising methodology and the nature of educational suffering.'***

The young man invited him in and gave him a copy to read.

'Did you really write all these words', the lama asked, throwing it on the floor and sitting on it. ***'All these words make for a comfortable seat.'***

'Yes', the young man replied. ***'I wrote them all, except for the ones written by others that I have copied'.***

That may be, but how can the mind wander freely when the arse is trapped in a chair for so long', Drukpa Kunley retorted, and began to sing a song,

Indivisible bliss and Emptiness, Ultimate Awareness, renews the bond between Lama and deity,
An unending string of dry words satisfies the ambitions of scholars,
False meditation is a fool's paradise
Preaching the law with pride and vanity
Is the weakness of scholars and teachers – remove it through humility and tranquillity

(adapted from Dowman (trans), 2000: 52-57)

finishing his song, Kungpa Legpa then held the thesis in one hand and a glass of chang in the other. ***Ha, your thesis is clearly more useful at getting a PhD, but sweet chang is better for destroying the demons of arrogance. Which one brings us nearer to an awareness of the non conceptual wisdom mind. Here have a drink.***

The man sat down and drank as he was told, and the lama began to sing again,

Stories of yesterday's adventures,
And even tales of accomplishments of great saints
Whose actions are unfathomable, sound ridiculous
When recounted today without confidence and authority.
However, by virtue of the precious Golden Spoon, the Sacred teaching,
Having opened the mind's eye a fraction, and by the virtue of that alone,
Reading innumerable accounts of the Adept's life, every drop of the elixir of miraculous truth can be absorbed.
And further, after distilling the essence of that elixir,
When the white conch-heart is saturated in purity
The path of knowledge can be inscribed with the Kusha grass pen.
And this gift of relaxation to zealous minds
Can be dispensed into every outstretched hand of faith and devotion
As an offering that gives of each his own joy.
And may the gentle stream of gathering virtue that arises from this offering
Finally carry all being into the Ocean of Omniscience.

(Dowman (trans), 2000: 176)

CHAPTER IV

HOMECOMINGS

This final chapter offered a response to the research questions by the poieses taken as a whole. These readings can therefore be understood both as another layer of analysis of the data, and as a critical reflection upon the theoretical and methodological approach that has been used.

In seeing this research as a series of knowledge productions, substantive and theoretical reflections are inextricably interconnected. The three themes that are offered here therefore seek to place the substantive findings in the context of what they can tell us about the ways of knowing that have produced them, and the possibilities for counter hegemonic knowledge production.

Chapter Outline

IVA HOMECOMINGS

My original title for this final chapter was 'talking back' – an allusion to postcolonial sentiments of returning to the centre, the 'writing back' (Ashcroft et al 1989, Burnett, 2003) of postcolonial literature – a desire to make plain the dominant directionality of this research - of a transformative encounter that inevitably says more about western forms of knowledge production, than it does of schooling and indigenous knowledge in Ladakh.

In the end, I chose 'homecomings' - it conjures different ghosts. Crapanzano, in his book Imaginative Horizons, adopts the genre of 'Montage' not only for the epistemological troubling that this causes, but also in part as

> ***the force – indeed the violence – of the montage should be familiar, since it replicates in many ways field research.***
>
> ***(Crapanzano, 2004: 5)***

The violent return back to the 'home', back to the 'centre', back to the starting point of a journey. Reverse culture shock. The familiar that is itself made 'Other' - different readings of the self made possible.

And so, even as this has been written both here as well as there, even as this process of writing has been an engagement in an 'armchair nomadism' (St. Pierre, 1997), even as I have sought to trouble the boundaries between theory and experience, this chapter is explicitly located differently to the poieses, it is a relocation back to the academy – a 'relocation' not simply a 'talking back'.

Research questions

1. What are the impacts of western education on IK practices in Ladakh?
2. What are the dynamics of hegemony of and resistance to western education, and how are these articulated?
3. What forms of research knowledge production might offer counter hegemonic strategies able to offer more appropriate educational experiences for Ladakhi students?
4. How might a research encounter be a decolonising transformative space?

The return is also a return to the research questions. I have characterised each poiesis as a 'response' to the research questions – each poiesis a different analysis of the ways that the context of the fieldwork 'answered' them. But there is also the ways in which the data responded not only as individual poieses, as individual knowledge productions, as we have seen so far, but as a whole – to see the patterns that play across their surface.

The three themes that I offer here do not seek to offer a broader frame within which earlier understandings can be located, but rather add another layer of analysis that can only but add to the profusion of possible readings and interpretations. As such, I am with Crapanzano, when he says that his concern is,

> ***with openness and closure, with the way in which we construct, wittingly or unwittingly, horizons that determine what we experience***
>
> ***(Crapanzano, 2004: 2)***

I am therefore sceptical of any attempt at narrative closure that gives us the illusory satisfaction of an ending, implicated as this is, in the inscription of authoritative knowledge claims, that would suggest that the circle has been closed, simply so that

> ***The restless, appropriative spirit of the researcher is (temporarily) at peace.***
>
> ***(Scheurich, 1997: 74)***

Rather the distancing that we get from looking as a whole, gives us not so much broader structures, but ways of conceptualising differently. Deleuze helpfully offers the concept of the transversal, as a tool to consider broader emergent conceptualisations that does not draw upon structuralist metaphors. As Schrag describes it, the transversal is

> ***convergence without coincidence, Conjuncture without concordance, overlapping without assimilation, and union without absorption.***
>
> ***(Schrag, 1997: 128)***

The themes that I conclude with here are therefore a set of alternative readings of the data that open up directions for further work and understandings.

I have argued throughout that there is only a reflexive process of coming to know, wherein we become aware of the very construction of that which we might call the substantive aspects of the research. As such any separation of substantive from theoretical or methodological issues is in error in giving the impression that it is possible to explicate a substantive arena for debate that is independent of our knowledge production process.

Rather, I seek to place centre stage the ways that different theoretical insights have enabled these 'findings' to be produced so as to engage in the critical project of understanding the ways that our knowledge productions are implicated in praxis, in our own contribution to world-making.

The possibility of engaging in this project was only possible through a particular way of relating to theory and methodology. Only by taking theory both 'seriously' and 'lightly', by understanding methodology as a process of 'living theory', has it been possible not to close down the possibilities of knowing differently. Similarly, it was only by allowing for a dialectic between the experiential and the theoretical that has allowed for productive engagements between western theory and Buddhist philosophy.

Many of the poieses have been explicit attempts to experience in ways that were new to me – and some feature heavily in this thesis – the pieces on dzo dancing and on sculpting knowledge, the experience with the oracle, Ayu Lhamo for instance – have been taken, not only as data, but as opportunities to rethink what data might be in this context. I do not say that these were experiences that a Ladakhi would have, yet, in the sense that I am using it – they were indigenous – they stood contra to dominant ways of (research) knowing.

Far from reducing the critical dimension of the work, the explicitly postmodern framework has, I feel, made available for inclusion new forms of critique, that I now outline.

IVB DECOLONISING ENCOUNTERS

Indigenous creations

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's influential book 'Decolonising Methodologies' (Smith, 1999) outlined the possibilities of new directions for decolonising research.

This journey into indigenous lands for a western white man is for sure an uncertain one, located in territory that is quite rightly controversial, contested. The shadow of Eurocentrism hangs heavily in the air here – 'what right do you have (as a white western man – triply dis/advantaged) to research indigenous knowledge' – The signpost reads 'This is the land of Other – foreign venturers beware'.

Gramsci himself was sceptical of the idea that belonging to a subaltern cultural group necessarily afforded a counter hegemonic perspective, cognisant of the separation of local intellectuals from their own culture as being a potential barrier to their participation in counter hegemonic action. The fact that western conceptions are privileged over local indigenous ones in the education system, means that the more commitment to and ability in western thought a person possesses, the more likely they are to become part of the local intellectual elite, thereby often situating them antagonistically to indigenous perspectives, seeing these as superstitions that they have overcome. This was brought home to me forcefully when, in Bhutan, I was involved in the development of a localised KS3 integrated science curriculum – I found myself in the rather strange position of arguing for the inclusion of Buddhist perspectives and linkages while my Bhutanese colleagues were arguing for their exclusion.

It would perhaps have been easier to walk away, leave the consideration of what a decolonising methodology might be to the 'Others'. Indeed the question of whether a non-indigenous person has the right to research on indigenous lands is a relevant question, research, as Smith has shown, being implicated in colonial rule.

> ***From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term 'research', is extricably linked to colonialism. (...) It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity. (...) It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that is possible to know of us on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us.***
>
> ***(Smith, 1999: 1)***

So I have been cautious - sought to learn, rather than teach; seek to talk back, rather than talk to; sought to take the research as an encounter attempting to overcome western notions of academic knowledge production; sought to avoid ways of knowing that are implicated in discriminating practices.

But the west cannot help but be implicated, and as Habashi (2005) tells us, while entering this space for a westerner is potentially problematic, so is not entering,

> ***The concept of decolonisation implies that scholars from formerly colonized nations are free from oppressive conditions and have the academic freedom to produce, implement, or reconstruct academic discourses.***
>
> ***(Habashi, 2005: 774)***

From this vantage, Habashi goes on to say that the task of

> ***encouraging indigenous scholars to look for a solution is part of a colonialist ideology that maintains the illusions that we have choices and power'***
>
> ***(Habashi, 2005: 785)***

We are left trapped, uncertain whether it is ethical to participate, or not participate. I hear the shade of colonialism laughing, *dividing us still.*

I say that I have taken an 'indigenous knowledge perspective' here. I do not say an 'indigenous knowledge practitioner perspective'.

Perhaps this is a cop out – certainly, the idea of a perspective of a concept should not be let past completely unchallenged. Yet, this move allows me to try to speak differently, allows me to 'be on the side of' those who practice indigenous knowledge, without making any claims to speak for them. In the anti-essentialist way that I use the concept of indigeneity, I seek to retain this as a site of contestation and debate.

I have taken the development of an indigenous perspective as an act of creation where, taking indigeneity as a contemporary resistance, what might be indigenous here, in this moment, is attempted to be brought into being.

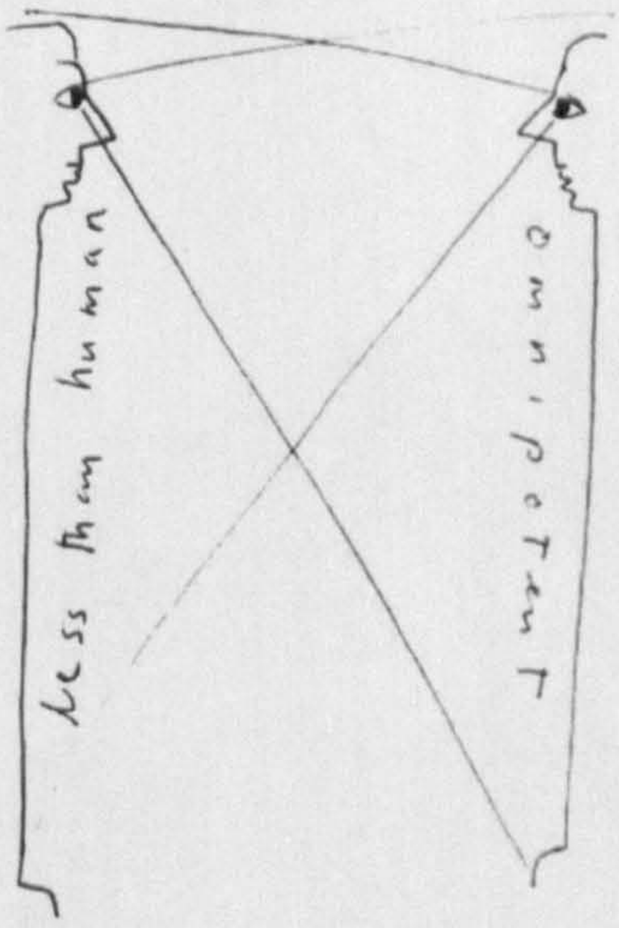
Let us be clear, this is an act of creation in the moment of now, in 21st century Ladakh, what resistance might be. The search for an indigenous decolonising research is an act of creation, not an act of archaeology.

The coloniser and the colonised. Berger's drawing reminds us that colonialism is a form of relationality – a particular form of encounter.

Perhaps it would seem inappropriate to suggest that both sides of this colonial encounter suffered, so, let me rephrase, let me try to find common ground, to overcome the colonial line that has separated us.

The process of decolonisation is one that needs to be undertaken on both sides. Whatever the different standpoints, whatever the different direction of their projects, the colonised and the coloniser share at heart, one common ambition – and in this we can be united – to decolonise our ways of knowing.

In the (research) encounter, two histories intertwine. Both are implicated in colonialism – though from different standpoints. That it is an uncertain encounter is understood, that it is also one of possibility for decolonisation, as well as reinscribing the colonial needs to be embraced.



'The sight of the other
confirmed each
in his inhuman estimate of himself.'

Berger, J (1972:96)

The ordinary other

As a concept, the 'Other' is having rather a bad time of it, principally associated as it is with caution – do not 'Other'. But the term has alternative genealogies, which offer different possibilities of encounter, more hopeful trajectories.

Buber (1934) draws a distinction between an I – It and an I -Thou relationship. While I-It is a relationship with an 'Other' as object, a subject-object relationship, I-Thou is a relationship with another I that is not I, a relationship with an eternal other (Sidorkin, 1999). This later is seen as true dialogue, and a higher state of existence – the relationality of existence that we live by

> *And in all seriousness of truth, hear this: without It man cannot live. But he who lives with It alone is not a man.*
>
> *(Buber, 1934, quoted in Sidorkin, 1999:12-13)*

In a similar way, Levinas, taking the metaphor of the face of the stranger, treats the 'Other' as the only basis for ethical action. Arguing that it is precisely because the other has no power over you, that responding to the appeals of stranger is ethical.

> *The face of the other has no power to command but yet it does, it says do me no harm, do me good'*
>
> *(Joldershma, 2003)*

It is here, precisely because the other has no power to command, that an ethical encounter is not a rational response to a shared situation, but beyond rationality. It is ethical precisely because it must be irrational.

What I take from this perspective through Buber, Levinas, Bauman, Buddhism is a striving for is a ways to consider an intersubjective that is built upon a radical alterity as the basis for an ethical encounter, where subjectivity (after post-structuralism) has not been dissolved so much as relocated into the world of dialogue and intersubjectivity (Bakhtin, 1981). As Biesta notes,

> *The subjective is always on the inside of history, on the inside of language, on the inside of the discursive and nondiscursive practices in which she constitutes her own subjectivity and works at the limits of herself. In this sense, then, Foucault's "deconstruction" leads to a recognition of the primacy of the intersubjective.*
>
> *(Biesta, 1998: 11)*

I have written about many encounters during my fieldwork - encounters that were taken as moments to reconfigure how I understood what it might mean to 'come to know' in this context – the old monk, perhaps stands out as most memorable, as an encounter that brought forth, ideas of transmission, of embodied knowledge – but there were many others. It was precisely the 'Otherness' of the monk in the sense that it is his difference that offered the possibility of transformation.

Perhaps Taussig would call this mimesis, a 'yielding to the other' (Taussig, 1993). Perhaps Werbner would call it an artificial hybridity. Perhaps we simply do not pay sufficient attention to the possibilities of productive encounters, where, to repeat the quote from Jackson that might stand as motif of this research,

> *(Ethnography's) warrant and worth lie in it's power to describe in depth and detail and dynamics of intersubjective life under a variety of cultural conditions in the hope that one may thereby be led to an understanding of how* ***those rare moments of erasure and effacement occur when self and other are constituted in mutuality and acceptance rather than violence and contempt***
>
> *(Jackson, 1998: 208, my emphasis)*

Hughie and I are walking across the desert one day, below Saboo, talking about paradox, about the line between appreciation and 'Othering', about how to appreciate the other, while rejecting the 'Other' - how, what is valuable is 'ordinariness' – the paradox that it is the very mundane of the ordinary that is the heart of its worth.

This paradox of the ordinary takes me. The ordinary are silhouettes at dusk – individuals, but deliberately indistinct. In this twilight world, it is the commonality of their individuality that is being witnessed. We know that each voice has a story, an individual story, that the pain is a unique one, and that pain must be an individual expression, but it is the commonality of the individual pain that is calling - voices in the dark, from the hills, from the villages, from ordinary wo/man.

Humanity is too undefined, and we should retain at least the possibility of definition, the call to fill up, to map out the outline with our own interpretations and experiences, every wo/man….calls

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Between the characters in my poieses and an indigenous knowledge perspective stands a silhouette at dusk – reduced neither to individual nor group.

Gramsci, as does, Santos, Smith, Levinas, prefer a being 'for the other'. The question is not who speaks, but what they speak, from what position do they speak.

IVC CRITICAL NARRATIONS

I often return to the interview with the second blacksmith. There are many reasons for this - this photo for one – his child casually picks up a hammer, giving meaning to his words of how he can manage this heavy work because he himself was used to it as a child.

There are other reasons too – the violence of the words of the college student perhaps - 'we do not talk' - still ring in my ears.

Here in this exchange, these words placed alongside the experience of meeting this man, has somehow become the research. Like the water powered grinding mill that we started with, this memory becomes loaded with meaning.

In chapter I, I referred to the theoretical rhizome I was using as a critical narrative approach, to flag up its two key trajectories – the critical, with its emphasis on inequality, hegemony, of the possibilities of emancipatory visions of the world, with a narrative approach that sought to give privilege to an experiential world.

The metaphor of weaving is useful here. The threads of the critical and the narrative are woven together to form a whole new cloth that is not only more than each alone, but impossible for each alone - a whole new dimension has been formed.

It is in taking a particular way of relating to theory that the critical and the experiential are in dialectic; it is this that allows this very particular encounter with the blacksmith to connect to critical meanings that seek to trace mechanisms of hegemony and inequality.

In the same way that I have argued that a postmodern reading of theory has allowed for the profusion of critical insights, so too, I argue that an immersion in the experiential of specific encounters has not reduced the possibility of tracing societal mechanisms of power, but on the contrary has opened up new spaces for *understanding their mechanisms, and so the possibilities for resistance.*

There are two specific interrelated conceptualisations of the operation of hegemony that have come out of this broadened, more sensitive understanding, that I will now turn to.

Knowledge Habitat

Perhaps the most fruitful transformation of an initial theoretical orientation was the shift from seeing indigenous knowledge as a 'practice' to one reformulated around issues of 'embodied knowledge'. The implication of this – that indigenous knowledge can be fruitfully thought of not so much as a set of 'practices' – skills if you will, that can be learnt, passed on, but as a form of bodily enaction, that is embedded in forms of subjectivity that are as, people expressed it, as much to do with 'being used to' the

work, 'being for the poor' of the village, 'being slow', 'being prepared to do hard work'.

This shift opened up further territories, because bodies, in their materiality are located in landscape, and in the third poiesis, I offered the concept of a 'knowledge habitat' as a way to think about the different forms of locatedness of indigenous knowledge – located in landscape, in community, in particular relationship to time. Each dimension of the habitat offering a different possible mechanisms for western schooling to be hegemonic over indigenous knowledge.

Perhaps the most obviously seen mechanism that came out of this was a sensitivity to the direct physical displacement of young people from the indigenous knowledge practitioners thereby leading to indigenous knowledge being simply 'lost in transmission'. This then drew attention to the geographical location of private and semi-private schools and their role in maintaining a discourse of a 'good' school that was creating these patterns of dislocation.

Local farming knowledge appropriate to the dry conditions is being replaced by western ideas brought in by young university educated agricultural experts; how indigenous knowledge that has developed complex irrigation canals is replaced by 'modern' water management systems; traditional building materials suitable for the local climate are replaced by cement bricks that have poorer insulation properties; free water powered grinding mills are being replaced by petrol driven ones

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But the concept of a habitat draws attention to non-physical as well as physical dimensions. The first poiesis, dzo dancing, not only looked at embodied knowledge but was as much about the 'fragile narratives' of indigenous knowledge that too were located in specific geographical and intersubjective storytelling contexts. The fact that old people know stories that are hypothetically available to be passed on to young people, misses the point that if their storytelling locations are under threat – because people no longer share time to sit around the rantok, go up with the dzo in summer, talk to each other in the evenings – this knowledge is not enacted.

Perhaps the most expressed of all themes was the issue of time, which I have characterised as a new 'busy-ness'. This changing relationship to time meant that indigenous knowledge practices were often disregarded for being slow – that people had no time to grow crops, to use the rantok, to learn how to make a 'tab'.

The concept of a knowledge habitat allows us to see the impacts of changing livelihood practices as encroachments into an indigenous knowledge habitat.

Neglecting the Indigenous

Looked at together, these different processes of loss of indigenous knowledge do two things. First, they draw attention to new 'softer' mechanisms for hegemony. And this is where the metaphor of a habitat is valuable – habitats can be destroyed carelessly - it is not that we don't like tigers, we simply encroach upon the habitats where they live? It is not that we do not value indigenous knowledge; it is simply that we wish to engage in a fast, modern life.

I would not claim that this is the only way to understand schooling in Ladakh – only one reading that is largely absented from educational and developmental discourses. And so, in a sense, this whole thesis in the end is an attempt to counter narrate against the dominant discourse of educational development.

So while, I have found more active processes of the ways that schooling in hegemonic to indigenous knowledge – have drawn themes of code, of nullification, I find that these insights are less important than the reconfiguration of mechanisms of hegemony through processes of carelessness.

In poiesis 5, I draw a distinction between discursive metaphors that worked with ideas of silencing and voice, and experiential ones that worked with recognition, neglect.

From early on in this research, I felt uneasy with discourse, felt the limitations of a reduction of human existence to the discursive. Of course, we might see a narrative turn, as embedded in the discursive too, and yet, I take it contra to the discursive as a form able to engage in the experiential.

Voices must be silenced to be unheard, but the experiences of others can simply be neglected. And in this neglect, in our simple carelessness to notice, are mechanisms of hegemony too - sins of omission. The key shift from metaphors of voice to metaphors of recognition then, is one that broadens our responsibility, and in this we come full circle to a being for the other – a being for that is active, that opens up new spaces to understand the limitlessness of our responsibility.

IVD BUDDHIST RESISTANCES

Between at the Marxist critique, which frees man from his initial bondage and the Buddhist critique which completes his liberation, there is neither opposition nor contradiction. Each is doing the same thing as the other but on a different level

(Levi-Strauss, 1973, 418)

I am promoting Buddhist theory here – both in the sense that I am advocating it, and also in the sense that I am translating it into new spaces, making it work for a new agenda. In this sense, I take Buddhist theory as part of an indigenous creation, in the sense that I used this earlier.

I see theory as a particular form of cultural product, as such, it too is developed in a particular cultural location. The project of engaging in indigenous theorising, can therefore be understood as an anti-globalising attempt, that seeks to find locally meaningful ways of understanding.

Buddhist thinking has been present throughout this thesis, both due to being understood as a locally meaningful form of theorising and also due to its resonances with western postmodern concerns. As with the last section, I see Buddhist theory (understood as a form of indigenous theory) as opening up new conceptualisations and new understandings. But perhaps the thing I have been most impressed by is the way that Buddhist theory is not only concerned with critique (life is suffering, we are trapped in suffering) but with emancipation (enlightenment is possible), as such it manages a way out of the paradox that western critical theory finds itself, taking a radical constructivist position that manages to retain an emancipatory agenda, a focus upon agency and overcoming.

Samsara

There is something graceful about the geometry of a mountain pass - the place where two curves transect, one of which you are at the top of, one at the bottom off. It is a slipping through. The solidity of the mountain gives way momentarily, permits passage.

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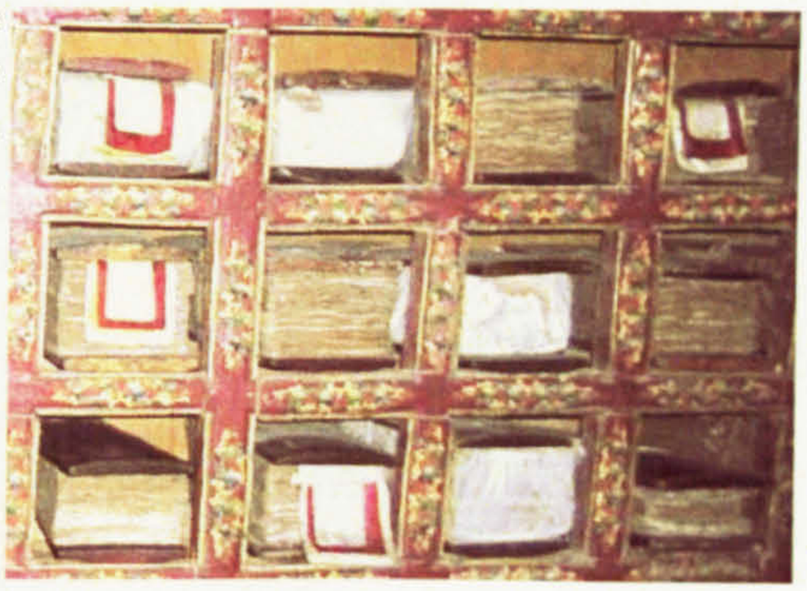
Amidst the swirling world only the rocks by your feet become possible evidence of a reality that fades in and out between the possibility of its knowability and the clarity of its uncertainty. On the mountain pass in the snow, it is believable that the world is an illusion.



There is a sense of being that comes from the world falling away, or the sense of loss of being that comes from having no reality to be located within. Whole mountains appear and then disappear again – their existence assumed.

In the experience is a feeling that I can conjure, as I write this, and the radical uncertainty I write about is made meaningful. When I read a Buddhist text that discusses illusion, I think of moments like this.

There is a sense through much of the poieses of being trapped - trapped in a situation, trapped inside particular forms of school codified logic, trapped in forms of competition that have come along with development. Trapped in the logic of schooling that is both a cannon and a magnet. Trapped the wrong side of an energy potential that, for all that we realise that western schooling is harmful, a rejection of western schooling is (understood to be) even more harmful. How might we find alternatives to western schooling, when the very act of resistance simply embeds western schooling more?

In many ways this thesis has been in part an attempt to escape - to find a location that allows me to hold onto structuralist concepts such as 'resistance', or the 'indigenous' and renarrate, relocate them within a postmodern, antiessentialist framework.

In Buddhist thinking there is a different form of critique, a different understanding of the conditions of our entrapment.

Yes we are trapped – trapped in cycles of samsara, cycles of suffering. And yet, and critically, the cause of this entrapment and so the possibilities for escape is relocated. We are trapped, not by the structure of the school system, not by the inequalities between government and private schools, but trapped by the power of the illusions that mediate our understanding of the world, constructs how we experience it.

These illusions, our constructions of the world that we live in are understood to be formed out of our past experience, that are, in Tibetan Buddhism, in previous lives as well as this one. It is this influence of past experiences on our present experience that is what is called karma,

> *Every experience that we have ever had has left an impression on our consciousness. This impression remains, from one moment to the next, from one year to the next, from one lifetime to the next, until it is resolved, which may happen either through the natural occurrence of one suffering or through deliberate spiritual practice. This is what Karma is, namely the collection of impressions that we have received since beginningless time.*
>
> *(Ray: 2000: 374-5)*

A dharma is the unit of experience that human beings can have. Dharmas momentary appearances in an experience on follow one another in rapid succession… what we think of as "I" is in fact a continuous stream of constantly changing moments of experience.
(Ray, 2000: 369)

Here, narrative approaches and Buddhism connect. I remember early on in this research struggling to find ways to understand how hegemony worked at the level of experience, until I came across the work of Ricoeur (1981, 1994), who in highlighting configurational aspects of narrative draws attention to the way that events are never simply temporally located, they are always configured, already *pre-plotted*. Narratives are therefore not simply that we use to make sense of out experiences, we can only make sense of our experiences through narrative.

This implication of this - that as dominant narratives are implicated in how we make meaning of our experiences, power operates at an experiential level, through narrative, to allow the possibility of some experiences while denying others - gives an understanding of how power and hegemony operates at the level of practice and experience.

This narrative reading has many similarities to a karmic one – whereby the impression of our past experiences remain with us, influencing, partially limiting, the experiences that are available to us, in the present moment.

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Hughie says,

> ***Karma is a misunderstood concept, people think it is about fate, but it is the opposite, about the possibility of change.***

———

I come to understand this, come to see the radical agency of this understanding. Yes, inevitably, the past constrains, limits us – but in managing to see how the responses that we give are simply that – responses to past experiences – new ways to see the now for what it is open up, and new possibilities for acting differently too.

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This understanding of how we might relate to the past has been specifically drawn upon in the seventh poiesis. It is easy to see how the directions of educational reform are a response to experiences under colonialism, and from the poor education of the 1980 and early 1990s. But Tibetan Buddhism reminds us that when we simply respond, we also simply remain within the cycle of suffering. And so, suffering under a poor educational system is replaced by - suffering under a (differently articulated) poor education system. Far from an escape, I have argued that the attempts to do so have simply embedded an inappropriate school system further.

———

We are trapped yes, but not in the school system, but rather trapped in the illusion that what will reduce our suffering is a 'good' school. Once freed from this illusion and from the suffering that leads from this, we are freed to seek alternatives.

———

What this analysis offers, and the value that I see in the promotion of Buddhist theory for such work, is the agency that this affords - in the possibility of understanding our situation differently, in responding differently.

It is not that the external is not present in the construction of past experiences, but that the illusions that trap us are within us. In relocating the source of our entrapment, we relocate too, the possibility of our overcoming.

In many ways the concept of an illusion to be overcome has parallels with western critical theory, in the concepts of 'false consciousness', and also of a 'dominant discourses'. And yet, and despite the theoretical debate in the west surrounding the possibility of agency, these conceptions remain things that are larger than us, that we cannot but be part of, even as we can resist them.

Illusions, on the other hand, are personally situated, even as they might be socially constructed – false ways of seeing where dis-illusionment is not only possible but part of human progress. New worlds are possible – it is up to you. As Ray puts it,

> *Mightn't we do very well, then, to realize that this world is an open-ended realm and that what we think and what we experience, both our hells and our heavens, are our own creations? That even the impasses that we now feel are, to a very large and shocking extent, unbreachable and impenetrable because our minds have become frozen and petrified to think so? Such a realization, according to Buddhism, is profoundly and radically transformative and enables us to become agents of creation instead of its victims or its destroyers.*
>
> *(Ray, 2000: 451)*

Illusion / praxis / moment

How do you understand the moment differently? How might we see things as they are so that we might respond differently? How do we understand these multicoloured moments, wherein multiple lines of becoming are being enacted? No moment is ever singular - each moment we might say (so long as we understood these only as ways of thinking) at once social, interpersonal, psychological, political. Each moment offering infinite readings, infinite ways of seeing, and an infinite range of responses. I choose a narrative style in an attempt to avoid reducing the moment to the singular.

Tibetan Buddhism uses the concept of 'paratantra'. Between our conceptions of the world that are purely illusory - an imagined world (parikalpita) and the fully perfected revealed nature of existence (parinishpanna) there is the middle ground, a world of concepts (paratantra). It is here, in this middle ground, where our karmic seeds experience the present and give rise to illusion

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Concepts have a certain reality – we live by them, we create them – they are necessary illusions, in the sense that I have described my Deleuzian constellation. We cannot but live with conceptions of the world, even though we hold then cautiously.

The stupa of white glass at Ti-se,
Is the centre of Jambuduipa.
Inside the stupa are the hold objects,
Which destroy the darkness of ignorance.
The darmakaya, Amitaba,
Which remove all darkness of ignorance.

The turquoise blue lake at Ti-se.
The abode of the Naga King,
Fills the storehouse with grain.
In the whole kingdom,
It fills the storehouses with Barley.

In all the valleys of the Purang Kingdom,
The land of the sunny mountain,
Prosperity and heavenly happiness is found.

(in Shakpso, 1993: 82)

Early one morning Tokusan, the head monk, was in the hills above the village picking herbs and mushrooms. He came upon an isolated hut.

He decided to knock on the door and beg for rice.

When the door opened a very old woman appeared and when she set her eyes upon his robe she prostrated herself.

"Please come in. I will fill your bowl."

The monk ate in silence. When he finished he said,

"What do you do here?"

"I live alone and no one visits,"

replied the old woman.

"I grow vegetables in my garden and sell them to the villagers for rice."

"What do you do when work is done?"

asked the monk.

"I listen to the rain make music on the roof and to the songs of the crickets, and sometimes,

the moon is beautiful."

After a moment the old woman asked,
"May I beg that you instruct me in Buddhism?"
The monk smiled. He had an affinity with this old woman so said nothing. The woman waited and finally the monk said,

"A man does not teach his equals. Rather you tell me."

The old woman smiled,

"I have nothing to tell and besides where would I begin?"

"Pray proceed," said the monk.

Again, the old woman bowed, but said nothing.

"In the monastery," said the monk, "five hundred monks call me Master, yet I know nothing and tell them nothing, for there is nothing, absolutely nothing. Is it not better to live in solitude, listen to the orchestra of the rain, the songs of the crickets and enjoy the some time beauty of the moon?"

The old woman smiled and then tentatively,
"I tend the vegetables in my garden, but do not converse with them. Yet without me they would soon be choked by weeds and die. Then they would never nourish the villagers."

The monk bowed before the old woman.
"Well said indeed. I return now to my cabbages."

(Gabb, 1956:88, quoted in Lewis, 2006: 837)

This thesis, in the way that it relates to theory, to ideas, situates itself in paratantra – wishes to understand how the concepts that we use are part of praxis, how they are world-making how they might be part of a making new, a poiesis, how different conceptions of the world might bring new worlds into being.

This is playing with theory, in a postmodern sense. Here, postmodernism and Buddhism meet, but while postmodernism, whether in celebratory or emancipatory modes might seek to offer alternative, better, more useful conceptualisations, for Buddhism this is a playing with theory whose purpose is to let go, to reveal the ultimate illusion of that which we construct. Here, better understanding is not characterised by better conceptualisation, but by less conceptualisation – a place where can simply, know, ultimately without conceptualising – to attain the qualities of the 'non-conceptual Wisdom Mind' (Ray, 2000: 436).

This possibility is connected with seeing our confusion, or misery and pain, but not making those discoveries into an answer. Instead we explore further and further and further without looking for an answer. (...) we go on a deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper, until we reached the point where there is no answer. There is not even a question. Both question and answer die simultaneously at some point. (...) This process of going deeper and deeper is the process of crazy wisdom and it is what characterises a saint in the Buddhist tradition.

(Chőgyam trungpa, 1991: 9-10)

And here perhaps, the connections between Postmodernity and Buddhism part company at last, or perhaps offer new directions, new lines of flight, new possibilities for alternative knowing.

How does western schooling become hegemonic?
What would a non conceptual understanding be? Can we offer research that, in attempting to understand did not lead to further conceptualisation?

How might we go deeper deeper into the moments of experience so that we might see them differently, better, 'see them as they are' – so that we might find understandings that are felt as much as known.

I do not know; the space that is outlined here seems paradoxical, as much Buddhist knowledge does. But in the end, and this is what I take mostly from this engagement with Buddhist theory – that paradoxes are not, as we tend to see them in the west, as that which, in bringing us to edge of our logic, gives us vertigo as we stare over the precipice at the impossibility of our knowing, but rather paradox as laughter at the serendipitous discovery of a new way of understanding opening up before us.

IVE A FINAL WORD

The end of the end – the stories that could fit into 80,000 words told. Many others were not so lucky, for now at least

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This thesis has sought to be a weaving of contemporary critical social science with a more human focused, experiential ethnography, a weaving that, in its duality of togetherness with separateness – is neither a merging, nor a collapsing into a broader framework. I have deliberately used metaphors of 'constellation', and of 'articulation' in an attempt to avoid the twin dangers in walking this road – that either the experiential simply collapses into critique, or that the critical collapses into a celebration of the personal.

I might characterise this as a new form dialogue between western and indigenous knowledge in the search for a decolonising research, but promotion is inevitably also an act of translation - linguistic, conceptual, and geographical – that brings new possibilities of appropriation, as well as the possibility of poiesis.

A commitment to be 'for the other' should not blind us of the fragility of this process of translation into these new spaces, and the further promotion that will inevitably come, as there is a call to move these ideas further, into the world of policy and practice.

So, I want to end in a spirit of caution, but also of hope. If the path to transformation is difficult, and often long, the paradox is that, as Tibetan Buddhism reminds us, each moment holds within it the possibility to think differently,

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So, in the end, I leave the final words to Tsering Dorji, in the spirit of transformative story.

> *There was this very dull monk, he was so stupid, he did not know how to read or write so, one day, he said to Buddha, look Buddha, I want to go up there with you, not be down here, so Buddha said, ok, then sweep the monastery completely clean every day, and so he did that, every day, sweeping sweeping the monastery, he did that and he became enlightened.*
>
> *(story by Tsering Dorji)*

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